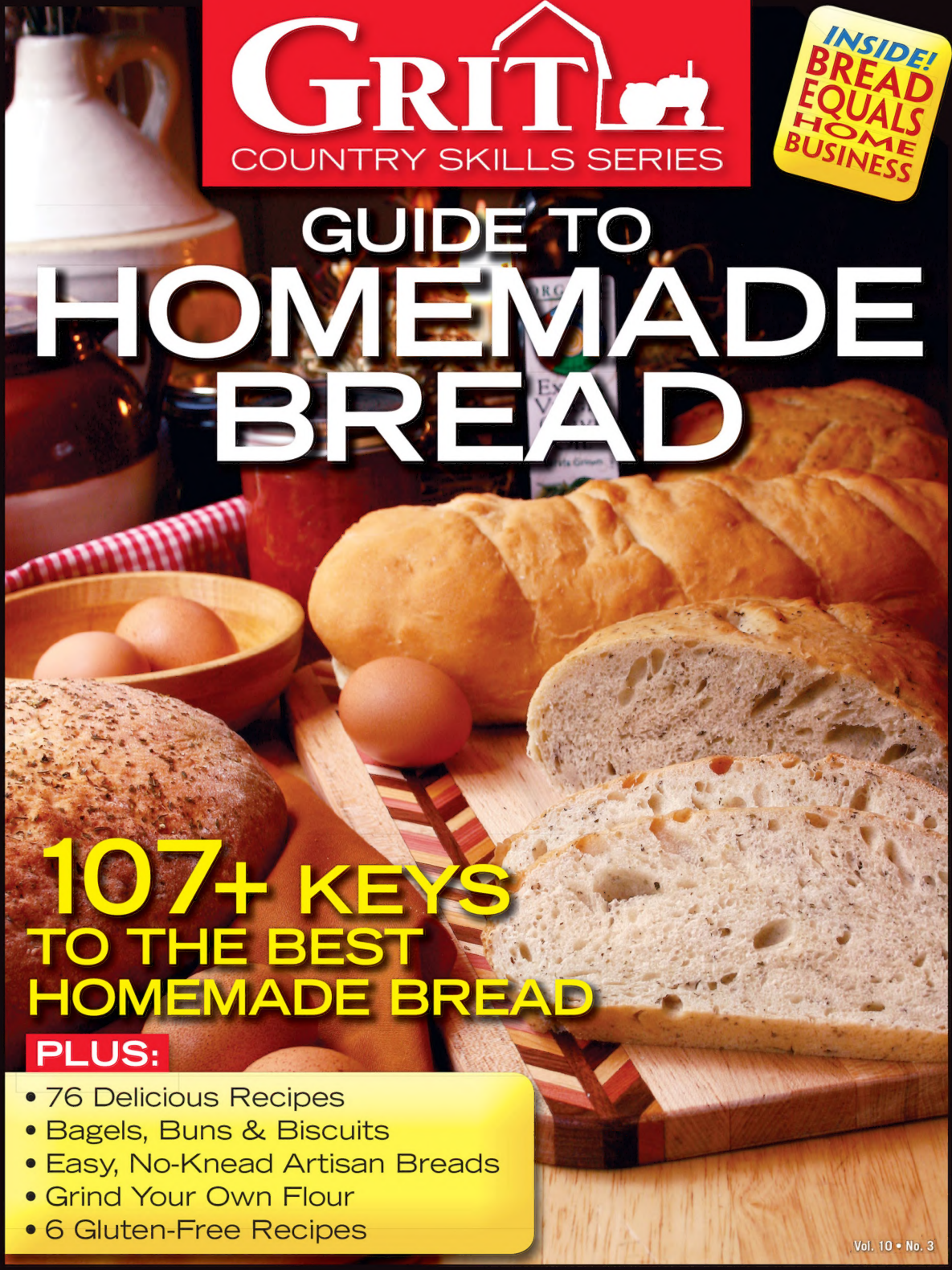
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FEATURED COMMENT

"I have large stainless steel and glass bowls that I use to mix and raise bread. The stainless steel is big enough for my batches that use 15 cups of flour or more and the glass is enough for 6 to 8 cups of flour. I use a large baking stone for the bread, and I have a roasting pan in the bottom of the oven with lava rocks in it. I throw a cup of hot water in the pan when I want to make a crusty artisan loaf."

– Chiot's Run on "Baking Bread Satisfies the Soul"

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SEND US YOUR PHOTOS

Do you enjoy baking biscuits, baguettes and other homemade breads? Have some great shots of loaves fresh out of the oven? Or of your children helping with the dough? Send us your photos and a few details about your fresh-baked creations. Send them to *ktrimble@grit.com,* and it may be featured on our social media platforms or in a future issue of the magazine.

RURAL COURIER

Let us sort through rural lifestyle articles, delicious recipes, and expert gardening advice for you and deliver everything right to your inbox. Be sure to sign up for your favorites, including GRIT Weekly and Tough GRIT (Grit.com/newsletters), Capper's Farmer Weekly (CappersFarmer.com/newsletter), and Good Things to Eat (GoodThingsToEat.com/newsletter-signup).

92% of GRIT readers have baked homemade bread

49% say nutrition is most important when it comes to the bread they eat and feed their family

FOTOLIA/PAUCHI

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

On "Living the Simple Life With Sourdough" by Lacy Razor

"'Did that sound ridiculously easy? Well, it should. People who thought you could fall over the edge of the world made this stuff all the time.' That's one of my favorite quotes ever. Thanks for the recipe. I'll be trying it soon!"

– The Cotton Wife, via *Grit.com*

"That did sound ridiculously easy, especially because I always have flour readily available on my counter. I love this idea, because I've always used the quick-rising yeast, which is getting rather expensive these days. Your loaves look divine! I must try this."

– Momisodes_1, via *Grit.com*

"Definitely will be doing this, and I'm sure glad you added the part about the hooch. Who would've known? Thanks for sharing."

– Paulette, via *Grit.com*

GRIT Magazine: Do you enjoy baking? What is your favorite thing to bake, and why do you enjoy making it?

Carolyn Dingman Johnson: I don't have a favorite, but I bake all my own bread, cinnamon rolls, hot rolls, biscuits, pie crust, cornbread, and lots of other stuff.

Sara Dugan: My favorite thing to bake used to be my aunt's caramel rolls. My favorite bread was a cold-rise bread that stayed in the fridge overnight.

Nell Croissant: I love to bake. I make some simple peasant bread. I love it because it has only four ingredients, and is incredibly easy to make.

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READER BLOGS

Grit is proud to offer blogs written by our readers from across North America. If you would like to become a Grit blogger, email *cwilson@ogdenpubs.com* for more details.

Bringing Back Bread Baking Day

by Texas Pioneer Woman

"'*Good bread is the most fundamentally satisfying of all foods; and good bread with fresh butter, the greatest of feasts.*' – James Beard

"I remember in the pioneer days of the Ingalls family in *The Little House on the Prairie* book series, Ma had a specific chore on each day. Baking day was on Saturday, which was the day all the baking would be done for the upcoming week. One of my New Year's resolutions this year was to learn the art of baking homemade bread, which means I am going to have to learn the art of patience for waiting on bread dough to rise slowly only to punch it down and wait again as it rises for a second time before being baked in the oven. Also, part of my New Year's resolution is to try new baking recipes." – from The Texas Pioneer Woman

Bread Making for Those With No Time

by Becky and Andy Sell

"You can make tasty, healthy bread every week. You can be the busy mom of three or the work-10-hours-per-day dad or the away-from-home-most-of-the-time couple and still have home-made bread on the table every night. I am a wife, a mother of two, a farmer, a freelance designer and a writer all in one day. Once I'm up, it's go, go, go until the sun sets. I know how it is. I get it. Having a healthy meal in and of itself is challenge enough without the laborious task of mixing and kneading bread. But last November I came across a recipe and concept that changed our dinner table forever. From the first batch of dough I made, it was a raving success!" – from Transitional Traditions

Of Grit Readers Who Make Homemade Bread
17% bake bread weekly
68% say better taste inspired them to start baking bread
56% purchase local artisan bread when they buy bread
78% make cornbread
61% make muffins
62% make white bread
53% make pizza crust
42% make sourdough bread

On the Web Become a Grit blogger. Email *cwilson@ogdenpubs.com* for details.

Fotolia/George Dolgikh

GRIT YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Homemade Bread Made Easy

Homemade bread doesn't have to be difficult to make. In fact, there are a number of ways you can put fresh-out-the-oven bread on the supper table with minimal time and energy spent in the kitchen. Watch how easy it is to make a loaf of light and fluffy wheat sandwich bread, requiring basic ingredients and minimal dough handling. Go to http://bit.ly/1UsgOX9 to watch.

Honey Banana Bread

Whip up a simple and delicious treat using wholesome ingredients and a touch of natural sweetener in this Honey Banana Bread. This quick bread can be made in a flash, and it's a sweet way to start your day or a nutritious treat for an afternoon snack. Visit http://bit.ly/1O2WlbH for the recipe.

Make Simple No-Knead Bread

Watch how simple it is to make artisan-style bread from scratch. Learn the tricks of the bread-making trade with Karen K. Will, previous contributing editor for GRIT and MOTHER EARTH NEWS, as she shows you step by step how to make delicious no-knead bread, http://bit.ly/1RFZ7nw.

Pumpkin Roll Up

Pumpkin lends a rich flavor to any dish. Go beyond the pie when you make this simple Pumpkin Roll Up. Start with an easy pumpkin sponge cake, roll it up with a sweet and creamy filling inside, and you'll wow everyone with how great it tastes, http://bit.ly/1TlusYQ.

How to Churn Butter

Nothing goes better with warm homemade bread than fresh hand-churned butter. GRIT Magazine's Managing Editor Kellsey Trimble shows you how to put Lehman's Dazey Butter Churn into action to make delicious butter from fresh or cultured cream. Check out the video at http://bit.ly/1TluxvV.

Visit youtube.com/gritmagazine to find more great food-related videos, and be sure to subscribe to be updated on new additions to the channel.

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GUIDE TO HOMEMADE BREAD • 2016

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THE MILL *Makes the Difference*

THE UNIFINE MILLING PROCESS RETAINS MORE OF THE GRAIN'S NATURAL NUTRIENTS

Story by John Furgurson, Dufur, OR

Flour is the foundation… the make-it-or-break-it ingredient of great bread. But all flour is not created equal.

Typical commercial milling processes utilize some form of grinding or rolling that produces heat which degrades the oils in the grain. Those oils contain important vitamins and nutrients, and flours produced in this way provide less nutrition.

Unifine milling is a completely different process using a single pass impact system that instantly pulverizes the grain with no heat involved. The entire bran, germ, and endosperm of the grain are processed into a nutritious whole wheat flour in one step.

The Unifine system can process a wide variety of grains, seeds, nuts, pulp, and legumes into top quality flours or powders.

Ultimately, Unifine flour is packed with many times the nutritional value of commercially milled flour. When comparing the nutritional information, Unifine flour is far superior to other milled flour.

Unifine flour is also more flavorful and easier to work with. For instance, you can get a nutritious, whole-wheat flour that behaves just like white.

Azure Standard in Dufur, Oregon runs the largest Unifine mill in the country, and recently launched its Azure Market brand of flours.

"If all you've ever used when baking is store-bought, all-purpose flour, you'll be amazed by the difference in flavor, softness and consistency of Unifine flour," said David Stelzer, CEO of Azure. "Plus, our Unifine mill grinds all kinds of grains and legumes, from barley and gluten-free brown rice flour to quinoa flour and organic, heirloom wheat pastry flour."

There are only a few Unifine mills in the world, and none can match the variety produced by Azure. Azure offers more than 100 types of flour including heirloom organic whole wheat, spelt, kamut, einkorn and other ancient grains, as well as many gluten-free varieties such as Unifine rice flour.

"We buy our grain from local sources, mill it right here on the Azure Farm, and ship it directly to the consumer," Stelzer said. "That's a good model… a more direct food chain. It's good for the environment, and it produces a product that's much healthier and better tasting."

As an independent, national distributor of non-GMO and organic foods, Azure also offers unbeatable values on baking staples such as grass-fed dairy, oils and nuts, cocoa, raw honey, sweeteners, herbs and spices. And Azure delivers directly from its warehouse in Oregon to customers in 38 states around the country.

EXCLUSIVE OFFER FOR GRIT MAGAZINE READERS:
Learn how to save $20 on your order, in addition to future savings at www.azurestandard.com/bakingbread

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You Too Can Bake Bread

Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned baker, our bloggers offer encouragement for your bread-making endeavors.

Compiled by GRIT STAFF

If your to-do list includes sharing a great-tasting loaf of bread, kneaded and shaped by your hand and baked in your oven, look no further. Grit's blogging community includes more than a few great cooks and bakers who can help. We've collected a few blog posts focused on turning out a great loaf of bread. Keep reading for recipes and tips to help you achieve your goal. If you're interested in becoming a blogger for Grit.com, send an email to *cwilson@ogdenpubs.com.*

Apple Bread

Apple Bread

By Mary D. Martin

Isn't it wonderful how a recipe brings back wonderful memories of endearing friendships, dates in our personal history or places that we can only go back to as we reminisce? I hope this fall harvest recipe, given to me by a friend, will begin a new chapter in your book of life.

Yields 2 loaves.

1 cup oil
2 cups sugar
3 eggs
3 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon soda
1 teaspoon vanilla
3 cups diced apples
1 cup nuts, optional

1. Preheat oven to 325 F.
2. Mix all ingredients well. Put in 2 greased loaf pans. Sprinkle tops with sugar. Bake for 45 to 55 minutes.
3. This bread stores well in the freezer if you can keep it from being eaten right away.

Triple Apple Bread

By Chuck Mallory

Imagine my dismay when one day, about a year ago, I got a hankering for apple butter. I had never seen it at my local farmers' market, so I went to the "local" Jewel store (Jewel-Osco/Albertsons/Safeway, and maybe a different name where you are; I know it's different from Kroger/Ralphs/Food4Less/Harris Teeter).

I couldn't find it. The first young clerk said, "I haven't heard of that, but you might check dairy." When I told him it was not dairy, but more like applesauce, he led me over to the applesauce. "It's not here, I already looked," I said.

So apparently they didn't carry it. I tried another clerk on another aisle, who said, "It must be jams/jellies." We

Triple Apple Bread

found it – two lone jars of apple butter on the bottom shelf. I picked up one and dusted off the lid.

"Hmm," she said, "that doesn't look right. Check the expiration date."

"It's supposed to be brown," I said. "It's not applesauce. It has cinnamon and spices in it."

"Oh, it's like cinnamon applesauce," she said. "So why isn't it pink?"

Suddenly I missed my small-town childhood grocery store, with owners Joe and Phyllis at the counter, along with worker "Milky," a former milkman.

I asked people at work the next day about apple butter. Remember, this is Chicago.

"Is that like honey butter?" one person asked.

"Do you chop up apples and mix them with butter?" another asked.

I realized apple butter might now be relegated to the status of old-timey and country-people food. But I still like it. When you're a kid and need to make your own after-school snack, it's easy and delicious to put a glob of apple butter on a saltine cracker. I still eat those occasionally for comfort food. Maybe the sweet/salty mix was prescient, since salted caramel became the rage in this decade.

Now that I'm grown up, I needed a grown-up way to use apple butter. Granted, this recipe doesn't actually require apple butter – since you could include the same ingredients a different way – but I'm pushing apple butter so it doesn't become extinct and I have to start making my own.

Triple Apple Bread

Yields 1 loaf.

2 large apples, peeled, cored, and grated
1 cup applesauce
1 cup apple butter
1 cup dark brown sugar
½ cup cooking oil
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon nutmeg
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
¾ teaspoon salt

1 Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease and flour 1½-quart loaf pan; set aside.

2 In large bowl, mix together apples, applesauce, apple butter, brown sugar, oil, eggs, cinnamon and nutmeg; stir well.

3 Add flour, baking soda and salt; stir well.

4 Pour mixture into prepared pan and bake for 1 hour.

5 After baking, let loaf stand for 10 minutes, then turn onto wire rack and cool to room temperature. Slice and serve.

6 This bread freezes well. Wrap tightly to prevent freezer burn and when needed, thaw at room temperature for several hours.

Easy Whole Grain Focaccia

By Valerie Boese

Eating whole grains can be easy in theory, but actually doing it can be a challenge with today's meals. I have been looking and I do not see much, if any, whole grains in our everyday American diet. I think most people really don't know what whole grains are, let alone know how to cook them. You probably think of whole grains as whole wheat bread, bran cereal, or oatmeal. While these are whole grains, there are many more types of whole grains.

Let's define whole grains: Whole grains contain the germ, endosperm and the bran. Types include brown rice, millet, bulgur, quinoa, barley and many more. I think most people believe they need to eat whole grains for fiber, which is partly true, but whole grains offer so much more. Whole grains are good sources of the protein, vitamins and minerals that our bodies need to be healthy. For example, 2 tablespoons wheat germ has 10 minerals, with six being trace minerals, two times the daily requirement for omega-3 fatty acid (which raises the good cholesterol in your body and removes the bad cholesterol), and two times the daily requirement of vitamin E, plus 3 grams of protein. Wow, all of this in just in 2 tablespoons.

I figure we are not meant to be overweight; this isn't rocket science, we plainly are not eating enough of the right food types to give our body proper nutrition, so we are always hungry, eating more of the wrong types of foods that make us eat more of the wrong types of foods, a vicious circle that can lead to obesity, diabetes, etc. We really need to think about adding whole grains

LEFT TO RIGHT: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/IKZDORR; CHUCK MALLORY

Whole Grain Focaccia

back into our diet, eating foods that will provide nutrition and satisfy our hunger.

I made the change; I decided to start adding a variety of whole grains into my everyday cooking. I started with ground flax, wheat germ, millet, barley and bulgur. I found I could add wheat germ to pancake batter, meatloaf, hamburgers and homemade breads. I have been adding millet, barley and bulgur to my broth-based soups. I found flax is easy to add to fruit smoothies and cooked oatmeal. I'm excited to try many other whole grains. Cooking with new grains is an adventure; they offer new flavors and textures, making meals for my family tastier and healthier. Buying whole grains today is easy; they are readily available in most grocery stores, in the health food section.

Check out one of my latest whole grain recipe, Easy Whole Grain Focaccia. It was easy to make using my bread machine. I took my white flour recipe and substituted ground flax, wheat germ and white whole-wheat flour. White whole-wheat flour is a grain that has been milled using white wheat, which tastes similar to bleached white flour, except it is way more nutritious.

Whole Grain Focaccia transforms an old Italian favorite into a healthy whole grain bread. The bread is topped with olive oil, sautéed red onions and rosemary. The smell of this bread baking in your kitchen is so amazing; the aroma of fresh-baked bread combined with the savory smell of rosemary is oh so wonderful. Try this bread with your next meal as is or top it with garlic butter, and toast it under the oven broiler. Yum!

Use savory ingredients, rosemary and red onion.

Whole Grain Focaccia

Yields 2 loaves.

¾ cup water heated to 105 to 110 F
1½ teaspoons yeast
1½ cup white bread flour
½ cup whole wheat white flour
¼ cup ground flax
¼ cup wheat germ
4 teaspoons sugar
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon butter, chopped in several pieces
1 large egg
3 tablespoons olive or corn oil (olive oil is best)
¼ red onion, sliced thin
2 tablespoons fresh rosemary, or ½ teaspoon dried, crushed

1 Add yeast to warm water and let set for 6 minutes.

2 Once yeast mixture is done working, add it with flours, flax, wheat germ, sugar, salt, butter egg in bread machine canister. Set bread machine to dough or pizza cycle and let it run.

3 While dough is being made, add olive oil to medium frying pan, add rosemary and red onion slices, cook on medium until onion is tender.

4 Once cycle is finished, remove dough from canister and place on a lightly floured surface. Divide dough into half.

5 Use two cookie sheets, cover each cookie sheet with parchment paper or cooking oil.

6 Lay one piece of dough on each cookie sheet. Pat each piece of dough into oval shape about ½-inch thick, top with cooked rosemary and red onion mixture. Let rise for about 1 hour.

HINT: The dough will be done rising when you slightly dent the dough about ¼ inch with your finger and the dough does not pop back.

7 Preheat oven to 375 F. Bake for 18 to 25 minutes, or until golden brown.

Orange-Oatmeal Zucchini Bread

By Renee Pottle

It's that time of year again – zucchini season. The time of year when even the smallest zucchini patch seems to be bursting at the seams with fruit of all sizes. The time of year that leads to a frantic recipe search hoping to find some new way of using the giant zucchini lurking under the leaves.

Too Much Zucchini

Some industrious person figured out long ago that overgrown zucchini could be put to good use in bread. But zucchini bread has basically remained firmly a homemade product. I don't think I have ever seen zucchini bread for sale in the grocery store, even though other quick breads – in the guise of cake – make an appearance there. That's OK. We home cooks are a creative bunch and quite happy to experiment, unhindered by commercial expectations.

In previous years, my zucchini patch threatened to take over the neighborhood. I made lots of bread, but concentrated on using zucchini in non-traditional yeast breads like Zucchini Olive Yeast Bread, Zucchini Ricotta Chive Bread, and Golden Semolina Zucchini-Tomato Bread.

Last summer was challenging for gardeners in the mid-Columbia region; too much heat and too little water. But I still

had enough large zucchini to turn into bread. I thought the following combination would be a nice treat for the children's lunchboxes as they headed back to school. It seems they agreed. They remain vague as to whether or not the bread lasted until lunch!

Orange-Oatmeal Zucchini Bread

Yields 2 loaves.

3 eggs
½ cup safflower oil
½ cup plain yogurt
Juice from 1 large orange
1 cup granulated sugar
½ cup packed brown sugar
Grated zest from 1 large orange
3½ cups grated zucchini
3 cups all-purpose flour
Dash salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon baking powder
1 cup rolled oats

1 Preheat oven to 350 Fahrenheit. Grease two 8½-by-4½-inch loaf pans; set aside.

2 Add eggs, oil, yogurt, orange juice, sugars, orange zest, and zucchini to large bowl. Stir well to combine.

3 Sift together flour, salt, baking soda, baking powder and rolled oats; add to egg mixture. Stir until all ingredients are combined. Divide mixture between prepared loaf pans.

4 Bake for 50 to 60 minutes, or until done. Test by inserting toothpick in center of bread. When it comes out clean, bread is done.

5 Let bread cool in pans for 15 minutes. Gently turn out onto wire rack and cool completely before cutting.

6 Bread may be frozen for up to 3 months.

Artisan Bread With Pancetta and Rosemary

By Sue Van Slooten

This bread came about as a real "What do I do with ...?" scenario.

It all started with leftover pizza dough. What could I do with it that was different but of course tasty, without going down the pizza/calzone route? This

Orange-Oatmeal Zucchini Bread

bread was the result. The first thought was a focaccia-like creation, with chopped pancetta sprinkled on top. Then I flipped through *Artisan Bread in 5 Minutes a Day* by Jeff Hertzberg and Zoë François, and saw they kneaded the pancetta into the dough.

Aha! We're on to something now!

What I will give you below is the dough recipe, which I got from The Table, the community kitchen where I work one day a week, with the pancetta and a liberal sprinkling of rosemary, kneaded in. Pancetta can usually be found in the deli section of your supermarket. The pancetta melts as it bakes, oozing into the bread like butter with porky goodness.

This recipe is fabulous, especially when you want pizza immediately.

Artisan Pizza

Yields 1 pizza crust.

1 (.25 ounce) package active dry yeast
1 teaspoon white sugar
1 cup warm water (110 degrees)
2½ cups bread flour
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon salt

1 Preheat oven to 450 degrees F.

2 In medium bowl, dissolve yeast and sugar in warm water. Let stand until creamy, about 10 minutes.

3 Stir in flour, salt and oil. Beat until smooth. Let rest for 5 minutes.

4 Turn dough out onto lightly floured surface and pat or roll into a round. Transfer crust to lightly greased pizza pan or baker's peel dusted with cornmeal. Add desired toppings and bake in for 15 to 20 minutes, or until golden brown.

5 This is if you want to make pizza with this lovely dough. For bread, I took things in a different direction after making the dough.

Artisan Bread With Pancetta and Rosemary

Artisan Bread With Pancetta and Rosemary

Yields 1 loaf.

6 slices pancetta, no substitute
1 teaspoon dried rosemary

1 Dice pancetta into ¼-inch pieces, and then knead it and rosemary into dough on floured board. Once evenly distributed, shape dough into a boule or round, about 2 inches thick in the middle, and about 6 to 8 inches round. Let rise covered with a dishtowel, for about an hour.

2 Preheat oven to 450 F. Gently place boule on greased cookie sheet, and slash with an X across the top. Dust lightly

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/MASSIMILIANO RAMAURO, RENEE POITLE, ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/DEBBISMIRNOFF

with flour, if desired. You can also sprinkle more of the dried rosemary on top if you wish.

3 Bake 25 to 30 minutes (depending on your oven), or until well browned. Remove, cool 10 minutes, and loosen from the sheet. Place on a rack to cool completely.

NOTES: Hertzberg, Jeff and Francois, Zoe. *Artisan Bread in 5 Minutes a Day.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007.

Visit the Table Community Food Centre's website at www.thetablecfc.org.

Sourdough Oatmeal Bread

Best Ever Sourdough Oatmeal Bread

By Renee Pottle

It seems almost impossible to find a true sourdough oatmeal bread recipe. I spent hours searching the Internet, the library, and poring over the not-insubstantial number of bread books on my home shelves, all with no success. Apparently oatmeal bread recipes are either written for straight dough (those that use dried yeast) or a combination of both sourdough starter and dried yeast. So, out of frustration I created my own recipe for oatmeal bread leavened only with a tangy sourdoughs starter. Luckily it was a great success!

This bread was so good that I made two extra-large loaves in the same week. I'd like to say that the whole Best Sourdough Oatmeal Bread Recipe family was visiting but that would be a lie. My husband and I ate both loaves ourselves. It really is that good. However, I can't tell you how long this bread lasts before getting moldy or dry because it didn't last that long in my house. I bet it won't in your house either.

Sourdough bread begins with a well-fed sourdough starter. Sourdough starter is basically a combination of water, flour and some sort of yeast. Unlike packaged yeast that seems to spring to life when combined with the other bread ingredients, starter is already active and bubbling when added to the recipe.

The starter, just like dried yeast in traditional dough, helps the bread rise. The actively fermenting sourdough starter also gives the dough a tangy flavor and a longer shelf life than other homemade breads.

Making a sourdough starter can be done in several ways. I use the method found on my website Seed to Pantry; search for "Make Your Own Sourdough Starter" (http://bit.ly/1Z8zkK9). Over the years, Mother Earth News has published several articles about making your own sourdough starter, including "Creating Homemade Sourdough Bread From a Starter Mix" (http://bit.ly/1qrievk) and a previous blog post, "A Beginner's Guide to Sourdough" (http://bit.ly/1OCFUIr).

No matter which method is used, your starter will eventually be populated with the local wild yeasts found in your particular geographical area. You may start with a dried starter purchased on your San Francisco vacation, but after a few weeks that starter will be less San Francisco sourdough and more Peoria sourdough or Austin sourdough. That isn't a bad thing. San Francisco may be famous for its sourdough breads, but I guarantee your bread will be delicious too.

Sourdough Oatmeal Bread

Yield 2 loaves.

2 cups sourdough starter
3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1½ cups rolled oats (either old-fashioned or quick)
2 tablespoons olive oil
1½ teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons honey
1 to 1¼ cups lukewarm milk

1 Mix all ingredients in large bowl or stand mixer bowl. Combine until soft, loose dough forms. Cover and let sit 30 minutes.

2 Knead dough 5 to 10 minutes, or until dough is smooth. The dough will still be quite wet. That's OK if you are using a stand mixer. If kneading by hand, you may need to add a little more flour to keep dough from sticking. Just add as little as possible so dough stays soft and loose.

3 Place dough in greased bowl, cover and let rise in warm place for about 2 hours. Sourdough mixtures don't rise as high as traditional dough breads. The mixture will be a bit puffy, but you probably won't see a doubling of the dough.

4 Shape dough into 2 loaves and place in greased loaf pans. Cover and let rise for an additional 1 to 1½ hours.

5 If using a regular 9-by-5-inch loaf pan, bake bread at 375 F for 50 to 55 minutes, or until interior reaches 200 degrees. (I use my trusty digital thermometer for this.) If you are using a single unglazed terra cotta pan (like I do) follow the manufacturer's directions. For example, I soak my pan in water for 15 minutes and then place the bread in a cold oven, set the temperature to 475 F and bake for about 50 minutes.

6 When done, remove loaf from pan and let cool on a wire rack for at least 15 minutes before cutting. This resting period is important to let the crumb set and allows you to slice the bread evenly.

7 As I noted above, this recipe is the "best ever." I have made hundreds of sourdough breads and this is by far my favorite. It's a great compilation of whole grains (oatmeal), light but well-textured bread, and the extra tangy flavor of sourdough.

Renee Pottle

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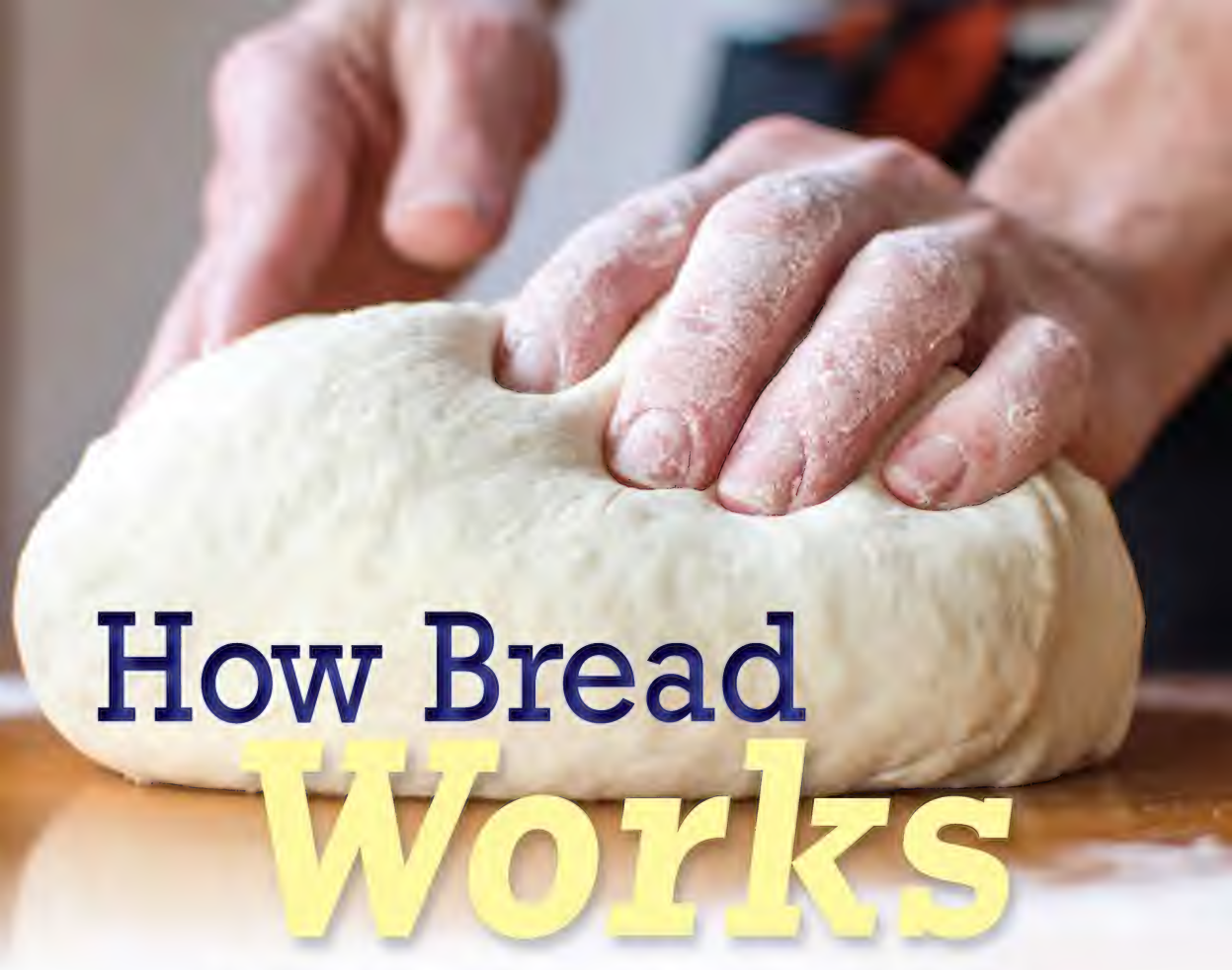

How Bread Works

The secrets to cultivating yeast and developing gluten.

By JENNIFER NEMEC

The process of baking bread often seems cloaked in mystery. You put a few simple ingredients together, follow a peculiar set of steps, and voilà, the staff of life. The process seems so alive, so magical, so ... intimidating. My usual response to such fearful thoughts is to research how and why something works. Like most things that seem scary, bread is, at its heart, quite simple. The answer to the mystery of bread revolves around yeast and a protein called gluten.

Harold McGee, who literally wrote the book on science in the kitchen (*On Food and Cooking*), breaks the making of yeast bread down into four steps: "We mix together the flour, water, yeast and salt; we knead the mixture to develop the gluten network; we give the yeast time to produce carbon dioxide and fill the dough with gas cells; and we bake the dough to set its structure and generate flavor." Sounds easy enough, right? OK, maybe it doesn't just yet. Let's break each step down individually.

Choosing and mixing your building blocks

Through the millennia, humans have been making bread, and its ingredients have become pretty specialized. Depending on your desired outcome (are you looking for an airy white bread or a dense, crusty artisan loaf?), you can take advantage of this quality.

The best strain of yeast has already been chosen for you (more on yeast later), you can filter your water (or buy bottled) to avoid any problems that minerals or the lack thereof might cause, and the most pristine salt is available right on your grocer's shelf.

Flour comes in many types. Bread flour is made primarily from hard red spring wheat and has a higher amount of protein than all-purpose flour. These flours are "refined," which means that portions of the wheat kernel (bran and germ) have been filtered out. If you're

looking for a more healthful loaf, you can add some whole-wheat flour, which includes the filtered bits, into the mix. You can't just substitute whole-wheat flour for bread flour willy-nilly because, while wheat flour has more protein, the bran and germ don't have the kind of protein needed to form the best gluten matrix and can actually cause a weakening of the structure. Other flours, like rice or corn, are also missing the crucial mixture of gluten proteins.

The mixing step is actually pretty important. Seems there's a trick to the order that things go in the bowl, as anyone who's ever tried to mix a whole lot of dry ingredients with a small amount of liquid knows. The yeast needs to be evenly distributed (to the point that some sift instant yeast together with the flour before adding liquid). The minute the water hits the flour, things start to happen. Even exposure to oxygen can make a difference.

The need to knead

At this point in the bread-making process, the dough gets agitated (in most cases). This takes some physical work and time. The dough is stretched and folded until it stiffens and takes on a satiny, elastic appearance. Kneading also creates tiny air bubbles that are later made larger by the work of the yeast. You might think of this like chewing gum. You have to chew it for awhile before it's ready for blowing bubbles.

All this kneading is really about developing the gluten network. Gluten is made up of proteins in flour, glutenins and gliadins. For more on gluten and how it works, including an example from Alton Brown, the king of cooking analogy, turn to Page 39, "What's Up With Gluten?"

Cultivating yeast

The next stage, which most people call "rising" and the food scientists among us call "fermentation," is a waiting period while yeast does its job. Yeast is a fungus, and the species used in bread baking is *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* (which means "beer sugar fungus"). The same action brewers use to create alcohol is the one bakers use for bread.

Fun fact: "All-purpose" flours are different based on your area of the country. In the Pacific Northwest and the biscuit-loving South, "all-purpose" flour is lower in protein than in the rest of the country.

At one point in bread's history, the local baker would take a sample of the froth remaining after brewing ale to leaven his bread. You could also use a portion of a previous loaf in the next, or, in cases such as sourdough, grow a "starter" of wild yeast in a crock of flour and water (see "Salute to Sourdough" on Page 48, and the image below). Nowadays, you can just go to the store and buy yeast. Active yeast requires some wake-up time soaking in warm (105-110 F) but not hot (140 F will kill it) water, while instant yeast can be added to the mixture directly.

Yeast's primary job in the bread-making world is to break down simple sugars into carbon dioxide and alcohol. Strangely enough, many of the sugars in flour aren't easily available to yeast (which is why it takes longer to ferment bread dough than, say, grape juice). Most modern flours include an enzyme (amylase) that helps break down the wheat starch into simple enough sugars for yeast to handle. The carbon dioxide created inflates the air pockets and raises the dough. The alcohol becomes trapped in the dough as well, but don't worry, it'll cook off in the baking phase.

If your recipe calls for a high-protein flour, it may also call for more than one rise. Between rises, you "punch down" the dough. The point of this is to evenly distribute the gas bubbles and yeast for the second rise.

After the dough is finished fermenting, the baker carefully forms it into its final shape (whether that be loaves, rolls or braids). It's then prepared for baking and allowed to "proof" – which is a final partial rise and settling

LEFT TO RIGHT: FOTOLIA/CREATIVEFAMILY; ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/JOHN PEACOCK

of the dough.

All this adding of air bubbles also assists in the lining up and stretching out of the gluten strands. And some of the byproducts of yeast's action even help the phone cords line up end to end. You've fermented enough when your risen dough doesn't "bounce back" when poked. At that point, the gluten has been stretched to its limit.

Bring the heat

The dough goes through many changes in the cooking and cooling stages. When you put your bubble-filled gluten mesh into the oven, the first thing that happens is called "oven spring," which, if you're watching through the oven window, is kind of spectacular. The dough becomes more fluid, alcohol and water in the dough vaporize into the existing cells, and the loaf rises quickly.

The heat also firms the crust and begins to solidify the gluten and starch in the cell walls. The expansion inside continues, but, with nowhere to go, it eventually ruptures the walls between the cells. The structure of the dough changes from a foam of individual gas balloons to a sponge of interconnected holes. Without this transformation, when the bread cools, the gas cells would shrink again, and the bread would fall.

As cooking continues, the starches continue to set, and the surface browns. Your bread is ready when you tap on the outside and it sounds hollow rather than dense. Don't cut into it immediately, though. Bread needs cooling time. The moisture inside equalizes, and the starch becomes firmer and easier to slice, although I'm not sure anyone can resist bread fresh from the oven.

Fun fact: The yeast you buy at the store is grown on molasses in huge fermentation tanks.

Needs for no-knead?

How does all this phone cord aligning work with no-knead breads? Well, it's about rising time and wet dough. I'll lead with the words of McGee, "The long, slow rise does over hours what intensive kneading does in minutes: it brings the gluten molecules into side-by-side alignment to maximize their opportunity to bind to each other and produce a strong, elastic network."

He also says it's important for the dough to be wet to allow gluten to form and move about. Because the rise is longer, you can use a smaller amount of yeast, which is a plus since it also means fewer yeast byproducts for this type of bread (see "Easy, No-Knead Artisan Bread" on Page 28). The air bubbles are less controlled with this method and therefore more varied.

What if I'm gluten-free?

Gluten is not the only elastic substance in the food world. Rye bread uses carbohydrates called arabinoxylans. Many gluten-free breads use xanthan gum to approximate gluten-like elasticity and a mixture of gluten-free flours. They still rise before baking, and the best of them even taste like bread.

For more on gluten-free baking, turn to Page 34 and Page 39.

THE TYPES OF FLOUR

Flour Type	Protein content (% by weight)	Primary Wheat Used
Bread flour	12-13	Hard red spring wheat
All-purpose	11-12	Hard red winter wheat
All-purpose (regional)	7.5-9.5	Soft red wheat
Pastry	8-9	Soft red wheat
Cake	7-8	Club wheat
Whole wheat	11-15	Hard white, soft white
Pasta (Semolina)	13	Durum wheat

Source: Adapted from On Food and Cooking, *by Harold McGee*

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5 Reasons Why Your Bread Dough Doesn't Rise

RENEE POTTLE

An experienced baker provides insight on this frustrating obstacle to baking great bread.

By RENEE POTTLE

Recently, several people have told me, "I can't make bread. It won't rise." Despite our best efforts, sometimes flour + water + yeast doesn't equal a tantalizing loaf of bread; it's just a large lump of dough.

Needless to say this can be frustrating. Making a loaf of bread is a commitment. We carve time out of our day to plan and mix in anticipation of something that can't be recreated at the grocery store: a freshly baked loaf of bread, its aroma wafting through the house. Having that experience crash and burn may dissuade us from ever trying again. And that would be too bad, because chances are one of these reasons deflated your dough:

Old dead yeast. Dry, inactive yeast can live for years. But if you used a packet of yeast found hiding in the back of the refrigerator, chances are it was dead. Yeast submitted to fluctuating temperatures may be dead too, no matter how recently it was purchased. Don't automatically assume you did something wrong. It could be as simple as dead yeast.

Yeast is too hot. Recipes that call for active dry yeast direct you to dissolve it in warm water. Sometimes the recipe calls for the liquid to be heated with fat and then added to the yeast. Either way, if the liquid is too hot, it will kill off yeast cells. Invest in a kitchen thermometer so you can test the water temperature next time.

The room is too cold. Yeast prefers a narrow temperature range, usually between 75 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit. There is a little wiggle room on either side, but not much. So if the dough sits too long in a cold room, the yeast will eventually become dormant or die. You can set the rising dough in a warm place, like on top of the refrigerator or in a gas oven that has an always-on pilot light. I usually turn my electric oven on preheat for just a minute or two, turn it off and let the bread rise in the oven.

Not enough time to rise. We live in an "I want it now" world. But rising dough takes time. A longer rise time could be due to a room that is a bit too cold or it could be that the yeast was dead. It could be because you are using a different kind of flour, or whole-grain flour. If the dough hasn't risen much, give it more time.

The wrong size pan. Sometimes it isn't that the dough didn't rise, but that it doesn't look like it rose. Usually it is because the pan is too large for the amount of dough. Use this rule of thumb:

- A recipe with approximately 3 cups of flour is perfect for an 8½-by-4½-inch pan.
- A recipe with approximately 4 cups of flour is perfect for a 9-by-5-inch pan.
- A recipe with approximately 4½ cups of flour is perfect for a 10-by-5-inch pan.

What to do?

In the meantime, what can we do with that flat lump of dough that didn't rise?

- Roll some of it out and bake homemade crackers.
- Wrap strips around sticks and let the kids cook it over an open fire – still one of my favorite memories from childhood.
- Stretch it thin and bake into flatbreads.
- Stretch it thin, cook in a skillet, and spread with butter, cinnamon and sugar.

Your dough may not have risen, but that doesn't mean you can't make bread. It just means you made a bread alternative and now you can try again. Good luck!

Converting Recipes for Automation

When a bread machine shows up on your countertop, don't throw out your favorite flavors.

By CALEB D. REGAN

Say you've been baking bread for more than 20 years; if you're like me, there's no nourishment comparable to a fresh loaf of dill bread, still warm from the oven. Your family members no doubt have their favorites, too – perhaps a rye loaf for ham sandwiches, or a banana nut bread for dessert.

But as age sets in, homemade bread making can get tough. Unfortunately, as in the case of my mother, who battles severe arthritis, we watch as loving hands that prepared countless meals can no longer engage in tasks like kneading bread or even combining dry and wet ingredients in a mixing bowl.

Take solace, though, in the fact that since the mid-1980s, the physical labor is no longer an obstacle in bread making. Released at American trade shows in 1987, the home bread machine has changed the way we bake one of the most basic items in our diet.

But now the question becomes, "How do I convert all of my favorite bread recipes from 30 years ago to a bread machine?"

The major difference between baking bread by hand and by machine is the size of the loaf. Nowadays, there are three common sizes of bread machines: small 1-pounder, medium 1½-pounder, and the large 2- or, in rare cases, 2½-pounder. In categorizing by pound size, you're really looking at the volume of the loaf rather than its true density, since loaves with nuts and dried fruit will always weigh more than the same size loaf made with basic ingredients.

Traditional recipes for bread were intended to make two loaves at once, so many older recipes call for 6 cups of flour. A single-loaf recipe will call for around 3 cups.

So the first step is to look at the manufacturer's manual or the box of your bread machine to see what type of machine you have and how much flour is called for in the recipes. If that favorite dill bread recipe of Grandma's calls for 6 cups of flour and the recipes in your owner's manual call for 3 cups, divide the dill recipe in half. It's a simple but important process of adjusting the recipe to the capacity of your machine.

With proportions, you're usually looking for the proportion of 3 ounces liquid to 1 cup flour, which is about 1 cup liquid to 3 cups flour. This varies, of course, but these amounts are a good guide, according to Beth Hensperger, author of *The Bread Lover's Bread Machine Cookbook*. Remember that eggs and honey always count toward the liquid measurement. When you run into a recipe that has you converting and dividing eggs, simply round off the amount as close as possible.

To order *The Bread Lover's Bread Machine Cookbook* and other great titles, visit GRIT's bookstore at www.grit.com/store.

Bread machines, no matter the size, have a specific order in which ingredients are to be added. The manufacturer's booklet will specify. For the majority of machines, you add the liquid first, then layer the dry ingredients, with the salt and yeast separated if the machine is on the delay cycle. If it's starting right away, it's fine to toss them in together (salt inhibits yeast). Extras, like fruits and nuts, are usually added after the initial mixing and first rise. Check your manual to be sure.

Now, just pay attention to the dough during the machine's mixing and kneading cycles. If the dough appears slack, add flour in 1-tablespoon increments. If the dough is stiff and strains the machine, add liquid a tablespoon at a time.

As long as you're fairly familiar with your machine and its capacities and needs, it should only take a bit of trial and error when converting those old bread recipes, but that's part of the fun. You'll get it just right eventually, and I'm sure your family won't complain a bit along the way.

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TO BAKE THE BEST BREAD Grind Your Own Grain

Healthy reasons you should consider grinding your own grain at home.

By CAROL J. ALEXANDER

In a quest for healthier, tastier eating, many folks have returned to the art of baking bread. What they don't realize is that they go to all that trouble to get good flavor with flour that may be a bit short on nutrients when compared with the wheat from which it's been milled. That's right – depending on the type, flour can lose up to 45 percent of its nutrients through oxidation within the first 24 hours of milling, and 90 percent within the first three days.

So what's a home baker to do for best flavor and nutrition? Grind your own grain fresh, of course.

Using a hand-powered mill, you can grind the wheat, as well as other grains, needed for a one-pound loaf of whole-wheat bread in less than 5 minutes, and you'll burn a few calories in the process.

Where did the nutrition go?

Of the 44 known nutrients essential for good health, only four are not found in wheat: vitamins A, B12 and C, and the mineral iodine. Commercial wheat milling to create white flour removes bran and germ, resulting in flour that is missing up to 80 percent of its nutrients. Manufacturers do enrich commercially made flour, but with only four nutrients. So what about the other 40 – and the fiber?

Maybe you think all those nutrients would be destroyed in a 350-degree oven anyway, but not so according to Sue Becker, founder and owner of Bread Beckers Inc. and former industrial food scientist.

First, even though we bake bread in a 350-degree oven or hotter, bread is done when its internal temperature reaches 185 degrees. In a recent interview, Becker explains that the enzymes in the grains make the nutrients more bio-available when they are heated. Some nutritional value may be lost, but some is enhanced by this design. She also points out that the vitamin E found in whole wheat is not destroyed by cooking. Convinced? Let's get started grinding grain at home.

The equipment

Before you go shopping for wheat, you need a mill to grind it. Grain mills come in two types: the electric impact mill that bursts the grain open, and the burr mill, which rubs the grain between two wheels of stone or stainless steel. Neither type of mill is better than the other; you simply need to know how you will use it before buying one.

If all you want is whole-wheat flour, any mill on the market can deliver. But if you want to crack your grains for grits, mill oily grains, seeds or beans, a burr mill might prove more useful. Generally, burr mills are hand cranked. Don't let that deter you. Many come with motor and bicycle kits. With a little do-it-yourself spirit,

FOTOLIA/ALAETIN YILDIRIM

Grinding your own grains makes breads that are more healthful and tastier than store-bought varieties.

Have the children help grind grains at home, and they will learn valuable and interesting - and fun - lessons about the foods they eat.

most folks can handle this adaptation with no problem. The advantage of the impact mill is speed. It can mill enough flour for a batch of muffins in less than a minute – but it produces only flour.

The wheat

You don't have to grow your own wheat to grind your own flour. If you want a local product, ask around at your farm store to see if anyone knows a wheat grower in the area. If you can't find a local farmer, check out the nearest bulk food supplier. I buy Wheat Montana wheat from a grocer who stocks bulk foods. A 50-pound bag costs $28 to $42 depending on the variety.

To make bread, or any kind of yeast dough, use a hard white spring wheat or hard red wheat. The red wheat has a stronger flavor and darker color than the white. However, for something like pizza crust, where you want a milder flavor, it's best to use the white. Spring wheat has a higher protein content, which gives you a lighter loaf. To make pastries, cakes, pancakes, or any product using baking soda or baking powder, use soft white wheat. The hard wheat will work here, but the soft wheat will give a lighter texture.

Maize being ground with a mortar.

You do not have to mix store-bought, white flour with your whole wheat. The secret to a light, soft loaf of bread is to make it immediately after grinding your grain. If baking with whole wheat is new to you, and your bread is still not light enough for your palate, try adding egg, honey or lecithin to your recipe. Some folks will start with a half-and-half recipe and slowly replace the white flour with whole grain until they are used to the flavor and texture of 100-percent whole wheat.

If you want to adapt a recipe that you're already comfortable with, simply replace all flour products in it (flour, germ, gluten) with your freshly ground flour. Measure the flour after milling, as you will get more than 1 cup of flour from 1 cup of wheat – how much more will depend on the variety and the coarseness of the grind. From my experience, whole wheat

TOP TO BOTTOM: COURTESY GRAINMAKER; ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/SARAH_SAEMAN1

tends to be drier than white flour, so your dough will not be as sticky and you will probably not add as much in the kneading process. Baking times should be comparable.

If you want the health benefits of grinding your own grain, don't be tempted to add gluten to your recipe. According to the Whole Grains Council (WGC), "If the grain has been processed, the food product should deliver approximately the same rich balance of nutrients that are found in the original grain seed." Becker says adding additional gluten to the whole wheat upsets the balance that the WGC refers to, thus rendering the bread no longer "whole grain."

Storage

Since I buy my wheat in 50-pound bags, I have to store it somewhere. If kept in an environment free of pests and moisture, wheat will keep indefinitely. In fact, legend holds that wheat kernels found in Egyptian pyramids have sprouted.

When I bring my wheat home from the store, I pop the bag into the freezer for three or four days to kill any unwanted pests that may have made it home from wherever the bag has been. I then take it out and bring it up to room temperature – this may take a day – before transferring it into a food-grade, 5-gallon bucket, preferably one with a lid that screws off easily and has a rubber gasket to keep out any moisture. If you put the grain in the bucket right out of the freezer, it will produce moisture inside from the change in temperature. Likewise, if you store your wheat in the freezer, you will need to bring it up to room temperature before milling.

Who can resist the smell of bread fresh from the oven? Or whole-wheat pancakes heavy with home-churned butter and maple syrup? What about tortillas, soft and warm, right off the griddle? Someone once asked me how my whole-wheat bread turns out so light and soft. Now you know my secrets. And it's not only more healthful, it tastes better, too.

Grain is being ground on an old-fashioned water-powered grist mill.

Flour gets ground manually with a stone.

TOP TO BOTTOM: FOTOLIA/YAMARINA; ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/LINGBEEK

How to Make Homemade Flour

Fresh, homemade flour is less expensive, more nutritious and more flavorful than store-bought flour. Learn how to make homemade flour, from choosing a grain mill to grinding technique, with these handy tips.

By TABITHA ALTERMAN

Why make homemade flour?

Here are a few of the great reasons to try your hand at homemade flour:

FLAVOR. Freshness, which can be equated with both flavor and nutrition, is the No. 1 reason to mill flour.

The moment after grains become flour is the moment of the flour's maximum potential flavor, after which oxygen goes to work scavenging flavor molecules and degrading fatty acids. Some types of fresh flour, including buckwheat, corn, oats, and rye, are even more susceptible than wheat to fast degradation. This is no different than what happens to coffee beans once they're ground. Many coffee aficionados wouldn't think of brewing coffee with beans ground a week or more ago.

VARIETY. With more than thirty thousand varieties of wheat in existence, you'd think options for nutritious flours would be numerous. Sadly, this is not the case. Research conducted by Dr. Donald R. Davis, a former nutrition scientist at the University of Texas, demonstrates how wheat has declined nutritionally over the last 50 years as farms have become more industrial.

"Beginning about 1960," Davis told me, "modern production methods have gradually increased wheat yields by about threefold. Unfortunately, this famous Green Revolution is accompanied by an almost unknown side effect of decreasing mineral concentrations in wheat. Dilution effects in the range of 20 percent to 50 percent have been documented in modern wheats for magnesium, zinc, copper, iron, selenium, phosphorus, and sulfur, and they probably apply to other minerals as well."

In addition, some of today's varieties have only half as much protein, and there is evidence that old wheat varieties often have substantially higher amounts of valuable phytochemicals.

A few intrepid artisan companies are bucking the trend.

Wheat Montana Farms, for example, is one of the few companies where you can buy wheat directly from the farmers who grow it. Their two special varieties, Prairie Gold and Bronze Chief, were selected for superior protein content. At Bluebird Grain Farms in Washington state, the nutritious heirloom wheats einkorn and emmer are grown sustainably and are milled to order or sold whole.

Similarly, Bob's Red Mill, King Arthur Flour, Pleasant Hill Grain, and Urban Homemaker, among others, sell high-quality, whole, unmilled grains for home grinding. If you have a great bakery near you, find out where they buy their flour – many small mills will accommodate special orders. If you notice that a farmers' market stand offers fresh flour, ask if you can buy some grains to grind at home.

If you want to bake with a variety of grains beyond wheat, sometimes the easiest way to get these flours is to grind your own. Buckwheat tastes nothing like wheat. This is an advantage, not a disadvantage. I use buckwheat when I want its earthy flavor. I use fresh cornmeal when I want sweet corn flavor. I use oat flour when I want tenderness, and flour made from toasted quinoa when I want extra nuttiness. Variety is the key.

If you plan to mill larger quantities of whole-grain flour, choose a grain mill designed specifically for that purpose, rather than a multipurpose appliance.

CONTROL. Not only are many of today's flours likely inferior to their predecessors, but they can also be inconsistent from one brand to another. For most bread making, high-protein hard wheat is ideal. Lower-protein soft wheat flours are better for pastries. Maybe you like the taste of white wheat better than red, or perhaps whatever you're baking could use a little extra sweetness from sorghum or a bold accent from teff. By milling your own flour, you have control over all this. You can custom-blend exactly the mix you need, without buying several different bags of flour that you'll then have to find room for in your freezer.

Home milling affords control over texture, too.

With a good grain mill you can turn any grain into a fine, medium, or coarse flour to suit your needs.

COST. Whole grains are less expensive than the flours that are made from them.

Depending on the price you pay for unmilled grains, you can easily make homemade loaves of bread for less than a buck. However, don't expect to be able to offset the purchase of a mill with grocery savings unless you plan

COURTESY VOYAGEUR PRESS (2)

Burr mills use two plates, which may be natural stone, composite or metal, to crush grain into various degrees of coarseness

to replace a great deal of store-bought goods with homemade versions.

CONVENIENCE. When did people decide shelf life was the prime virtue? I don't choose ripe tomatoes or fresh fish based on the fact that these items will last forever in my kitchen. Yet we've been trained to think flour lasts forever, when it really shouldn't.

Unmilled grains, on the other hand, can easily last 20 or 30 years, or possibly forever. And, they won't take up space in your fridge or freezer.

Choosing a grain mill

A few different machines can make whole-grain flour. Which one you need depends on how often you'll use it, how easy you want it to be, whether or not you need the machine to perform other tasks, and how much money you're comfortable spending. If you're serious about putting the best food on your table, any of these is a smart investment.

Some of these well-made machines may even stick around for your lifetime plus perhaps your children's.

Multipurpose appliances

The following appliances serve double- or triple-duty at least.

These aren't the ideal grain grinders if you'll be making flour or cornmeal a heckuvalot, but they offer a nice compromise if it's something you plan to do occasionally.

COFFEE/SPICE GRINDER

A coffee grinder is good enough to make flour from some items, such as soft grains, seeds and flakes. Sift anything ground in any sized coffee grinder through a fine sieve to remove chunky pieces.

FOOD PROCESSOR

If you can grind it in a coffee grinder, you can grind it in a food processor. The blade technology is similar, but the capacity is larger. I've had great success using the KitchenAid 13-cup model. Food processors can be used for an amazing array of other tasks too.

HIGH-POWERED BLENDER

BlendTec and Vitamix both make powerful blenders that grind an impressive variety of items, even hard grains. Do not assume that another blender can handle this task, unless it has been explicitly rated to do so. A good blender can do many of the same things a food processor does. If you'll use one a lot – for example, to make smoothies, soups, sauces, nut butters, and flour – you won't mind coughing up the $400 or so. The BlendTec machine can grind nearly anything. The Vitamix can too, but it comes with separate pitchers for wet and dry ingredients, making it pricier.

STAND MIXER

KitchenAid makes a grain-grinding attachment to fit its stand mixers. These are good for small batches, but be sure to give the motor time to cool between batches to prevent overheating flour. Stand mixers range in price from $350 to $1,100, and the grain-grinding attachment is $150, so this is no small investment. Like a food processor, however, a stand mixer has a number of useful applications, and they can last a lifetime. My mother-in-law has had her hard-working KitchenAid since the 1960s.

Dedicated grain mills

There are many types of grain mills on the market, ranging in price from $70 to more than a grand.

Google "grain mills" or search for them on Amazon to begin comparing models. Some grain mills are hand-operated, but don't think about getting one unless you seriously believe you will use it. It's possible to enjoy the manual labor, but if you know you're not that kind of person, it'll be a waste of money.

Grain mills are also classified based on how they crush grain: burr or impact plates.

In a burr mill, grains are crushed between two plates into various de-

courtesy Voyageur Press

grees of coarseness. If you've heard of stone-ground flour or cornmeal, it was produced in a burr mill in which the plates were made of real stone. Most burr mills today have composite or metal plates.

Real stone mills are prohibitively expensive, plus they require more maintenance over time. They also sometimes have trouble with especially hard items like dry beans or popcorn. Most composite stones can handle these materials. Some mills with metal plates can handle even oily nuts for making nut butter.

Burr mills grind slightly more slowly than impact mills, usually just enough to prevent an undesirable amount of heat from ruining the nutrients and gluten in your flour.

Durable electric burr mills include Family Grain Mill ($280), KoMo/Wolfgang ($400 to $1,100), and Golden Grain Grinder ($480 to $800).

High-quality hand-crank burr mills include Victoria (formerly called Corona, $75); Back to Basics ($90); Family Grain Mill ($185); Schnitzer Country Mill ($500); Country Living Grain Mill ($450); GrainMaker Grain Mill No. 99 ($675) and No. 116 ($1,200); and the wildly popular and well-made Diamant ($999), which has been rated by Lehmans.com as the finest grain mill available today.

Many of these are convertible to electric power with separate attachments (not included in these prices), and also offer flywheel attachments to make manual grinding easier.

In an impact mill, two interlocking cylinders spin within one another while grains pass through. These don't always make the finest flour. On the other hand, they are inexpensive compared to burr mills. The most popular electric impact mills include K-Tec Kitchen Mill ($280), GrainMaster Wonder Mill ($280), and Nutrimill ($300).

Make homemade flour

Before milling any grain, make sure it's dry and mold free. Pick out any rocks and pieces of chaff.

An old-fashioned millstone was one method used by our ancestors to grind grains into flour.

If using a coffee grinder or food processor, grind small batches. Let the machine cool between batches. Sift flour through a fine sieve to remove any chunks that made it through largely unscathed. If a good deal of the resulting flour is coarse, sift the finer flour out and return the chunky portion to the machine to grind again.

If using a grain blender or stand mixer with grain mill attachment, follow your machine's instructions to select the appropriate settings.

If using a dedicated grain mill, select coarseness and pour grain into the hopper while the machine is running. Or, with a manually operated machine, select coarseness, add grain, and start cranking. Let your mill cool down between batches to prevent overheating flour.

Keep your mill free of flour buildup by following its instructions for cleaning. With my KoMo mill, all I do is occasionally dust it thoroughly with a stiff brush.

Never grind items that your mill is not meant for. Some mills cannot grind oily items, such as corn and soybeans. After grinding oily items in mills that have been made to handle it, it's a good idea to pass a handful of wheat berries through afterward to pick up and remove residual oil.

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FOTOLIA/ANDREYSOV

Easy, No-Knead Artisan Bread

Methods guaranteed to make everyone a baker!

Article and photographs by KAREN K. WILL

I used to be intimidated by bread baking. I thought it was a monumental task that only homemakers invested in ... mixing, kneading, waiting for rises, expensive stand mixers with dough hooks, etc. I hate to admit it, but I went to the grocery store and bought the mini loaves of "artisan" bread trucked in from California.

My excuse for not baking bread from scratch was that I didn't have the time, nor the fancy equipment. Enter no-knead bread – a magical mixture of flour, salt, yeast, water and time. The world of homemade, thick-crusted, moist-crumbed, real artisan bread opened up to me, and it will for you, too.

After seeing a blurb about Jim Lahey's book *My Bread* (W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., 2009) in a magazine, I was intrigued, and rushed out to get it. According to Lahey, anyone could easily make no-knead, artisan-style bread in their home kitchen with a minimal

amount of time, equipment and effort. Really? It all sounded too good to be true … but as it turned out, it wasn't.

The following method of bread making takes a bit of forethought, some mixing, and a lot of time in between. It's a "slow rise" method in which the flavor is a result of slow fermentation, and the texture is the result of baking in a cast-iron pot. The yeast is eased to life over 12 to 18 hours, rather than shocked to life with warm water and sugar (this type of bread doesn't require any added sugar at all). The ingredients are pure and simple – the white loaf calls for flour, salt, yeast, water – and most are probably already in your pantry.

Due to the nature of slow fermentation, you'll need to start your bread the day before you want to consume it. This may be hard to get your mind around, but the effort is well worth it. There isn't space in this article to go over the culinary science and reasons behind this method – from fermentation to singing (the wonderful crackling sound the loaf makes as it's removed from the oven that signals the beginning of the important cooling process) – so for that, please get a copy of Lahey's book and commit it to memory.

My method slightly deviates from Lahey's. After baking several hundred loaves at the time of this writing, I found a few things that worked better for me in my home kitchen, resulting in less cleanup and better results. I've detailed two methods here for baking. The first is the most commonly used; the second is for use with recipes calling for buttermilk – dairy products burn more easily at higher temperatures.

Feel free to take liberties with these recipes to determine what works – or tastes – best in your kitchen, and to come up with new flavors. Bread is a forgiving medium for experimentation … whenever you combine flour, yeast, water and heat, you'll usually end up with bread in some form, regardless of your kitchen credentials.

Basic White Bread

3 cups bread flour
1¼ teaspoons salt
¼ teaspoon active dry yeast
1½ to 1¾ cups cool water, divided
Coarse cornmeal for dusting

Bread Baking Method 1:

1 Whisk flour, salt and yeast in large mixing bowl.

2 Add 1½ cups water, and stir with rubber spatula. Add remaining water (and possibly more) as needed until you have a thoroughly mixed, wet, sticky mass of dough. (The dough will not be like any other bread you've made – this will be much wetter and will not form a ball.)

3 Cover bowl with plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature, out of direct sunlight, for 12 to 18 hours.

4 After 12 to 18 hours have passed, your dough should be dotted with bubbles and more than doubled in size. (It may also have a strong alcohol smell to it, but don't mind that, it will burn off in the baking.) Dust wooden cutting board with bread flour and, using plastic dough scrapers, scrape dough loose from sides of bowl and turn out onto board in one piece. (Dough will be loose and sticky, but do not add more flour.) Dust top of loaf lightly with a little flour, and cover with clean cotton or linen tea towel (terry cloth will stick and leave lint on the dough). Let dough rise for another 1 to 2 hours.

5 About 30 minutes before second rise is complete, place cast-iron pot, without lid, on rack positioned in lower third of oven – not at the very bottom – and heat oven to 475 F.

6 Once oven has reached 475 F, remove pot using heavy-duty potholders (be very careful at this stage, as the pot and oven are extremely hot). Sprinkle about 1 teaspoon coarse cornmeal evenly over bottom of pot.*

7 Uncover dough and, using 2 plastic dough scrapers, shape dough into a ball by folding it over onto itself a few times. With scrapers, lift dough carefully and let it fall into preheated pot by slowly separating scrapers. Dust top of dough with coarse cornmeal.** Cover pot and bake for 30 minutes.

8 After 30 minutes, remove cover from pot, and continue baking for an additional 15 minutes, or until loaf is browned but not burned.

9 Remove pot from oven. With sturdy wooden or metal spatula, pry loaf from pot and transfer to cooling rack. Let bread cool for a minimum of 1 hour before slicing. (This cooling time completes the process and should not be overlooked!)

* For rye bread, sprinkle rye flour on bottom of pot.

** For wheat bread, dust top with wheat bran; for rye, dust top with rye flour; for oat raisin, dust top with old-fashioned oats; and for cardamom cherry, do not dust top with anything.

Wheat Bread

2¼ cups bread flour
¾ cup whole-wheat flour
1¼ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon active dry yeast
1½ to 1¾ cups cool water, divided
Wheat bran and coarse cornmeal for dusting

Use Bread Baking Method 1 on Page 29.

Dill Bread

3 cups bread flour
2 tablespoons dried dill weed
1¼ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon active dry yeast
¾ cup buttermilk
¾ to 1 cup cool water, divided
Coarse cornmeal for dusting*

Bread Baking Method 2:

1 Whisk together flour, dill weed, salt and yeast in large mixing bowl.

2 Combine buttermilk and ¾ cup water in measuring cup, and add to dry ingredients. Stir with rubber spatula. Add remaining water as needed until you have a thoroughly mixed, wet, sticky mass of dough. (The dough will be much wetter than typical bread dough and will not form a ball.)

3 Cover bowl with plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature, out of direct sunlight, for 12 to 18 hours.

4 After 12 to 18 hours have passed, your dough should be dotted with bubbles and more than doubled in size. (It may also have a strong alcohol smell to it, but it will burn off in the baking.) Dust wooden cutting board with bread flour and, using plastic dough scrapers, scrape dough loose from sides of bowl and turn out onto board in one piece. (Dough will be loose and sticky, but do not add flour.) Dust top lightly with flour, and cover with cotton or linen tea towel (terry cloth will stick and leave lint on dough). Let dough rise for another 1 to 2 hours.

5 About 30 minutes before second rise is complete, place cast-iron pot, without lid, on rack positioned in lower third of oven – not at the very bottom – and heat oven to 450 F.

6 Once oven has reached 450 F, remove pot using heavy-duty potholders (be very careful, as the pot and oven are extremely hot). Sprinkle about 1 teaspoon coarse cornmeal evenly over bottom of pot.

7 Uncover dough and, using 2 plastic dough scrapers, shape dough into a ball by folding it over onto itself a few times. With scrapers, lift dough and let it fall into preheated pot by slowly separating scrapers. Dust top of dough with coarse cornmeal.* Cover pot and bake for 35 minutes.

8 After 35 minutes, carefully remove cover from pot, and continue baking for an additional 10 minutes, or until loaf is browned but not burned.

9 Remove pot from oven. With sturdy wooden or metal spatula, pry loaf from pot and transfer to cooling rack. Do not slice bread for a minimum of 1 hour – this cooling time completes the process and should not be overlooked!

* For chocolate cherry bread, do not dust top with anything.

Oat Raisin Bread

3 cups bread flour
½ cup old-fashioned oats
½ cup raisins
1 teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon allspice
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
1 tablespoon wheat bran
1¼ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon active dry yeast
1¾ cups cool water
Coarse cornmeal for dusting

Use Bread Baking Method 1 on Page 29.

Cardamom Cherry Bread

3 cups bread flour
¾ cup dried tart cherries
½ cup chopped walnuts
1¾ teaspoons ground cardamom
1¼ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon active dry yeast
1¾ cups cool water
Coarse cornmeal for dusting

Use Bread Baking Method 1 on Page 29.

Seeded Kamut Bread

2¼ cups bread flour
¾ cup Kamut flour
1¼ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon active dry yeast
1 tablespoon ground flax seed meal
½ cup pumpkin seeds
¼ cup sunflower seeds, plus extra to sprinkle on top before baking
1 tablespoon sesame seeds, plus extra to sprinkle on top before baking
1 tablespoon poppy seeds, plus extra to sprinkle on top before baking
1½ cups cool water
1 teaspoon honey, mixed into the cool water

Use Bread Baking Method 2 on Page 30.

Pumpkin Bread

2½ cups bread flour
½ cup spelt or whole-wheat flour
1¼ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon active dry yeast
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
¾ cup cool water
1 cup puréed pumpkin or butternut squash, mixed into the cool water
1 tablespoon pumpkin seeds, to sprinkle on top before baking

Use Bread Baking Method 2 on Page 30.

Baguette

Prepare to become addicted: This baguette is unlike a traditional baguette in that it's soft and flavorful – you can easily tear off chunks from the loaf.

It's perfect for dipping in olive oil or spreading with butter – or even on its own, thanks to the olive oil and salt on top. It's also good for sandwiches, and it makes a great base for bruschetta.

To make this bread, you'll need a baguette pan. Matfer blued steel pans from France are a great choice. You can find them online through specialty baking sites or Amazon.

3 cups bread flour
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon active dry yeast
¾ teaspoon sugar
1½ cups cool water
Extra-virgin olive oil and flaked kosher salt

1 In large mixing bowl, whisk together flour, salt, yeast and sugar.

2 Add water, and stir with large rubber spatula until you have a thoroughly mixed, wet, sticky mass of dough.

3 Cover bowl with plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature, out of direct sunlight, for 12 to 18 hours.

4 After 12 to 18 hours have passed, your dough should be dotted with bubbles and more than doubled in size. Dust wooden cutting board with bread flour and, using plastic dough scrapers, scrape dough loose from sides of bowl and turn out onto board in one piece. Using dough scrapers, fold dough over and onto itself a few times to form a neat round of dough.

5 Pour a little olive oil into bowl, and brush surface of dough with oil. Sprinkle on a few pinches of kosher salt, then cover loosely with clean cotton or linen tea towel. Let dough rise for another 1 to 2 hours.

6 About 30 minutes before last rise is complete, heat oven to 475 F.

7 Once oven has reached 475 F, brush some olive oil in baguette pan, coating all surfaces thoroughly. Uncover bread and, using dough scrapers, cut dough circle in half. Separate halves and, using scrapers again, gradually work dough to elongate each piece to 12 inches. (You may have to fold the ends under or stretch it a bit with your hands to get an even baguette. Just don't overwork it or obsess about perfect shape.)

8 Dust hands with flour, then transfer each piece to baguette pan, stretching a little as you move it. Brush olive oil over top of each baguette, and sprinkle a little more Kosher salt. Bake for 15 minutes.

9 Remove from oven and slide onto cooling rack. Allow to cool for at least 1 hour before slicing.

Recipe from Plowing With Pigs and Other Creative, Low-Budget Homesteading Solutions, *by Oscar H. Will III and Karen K. Will.*

No-Knead Ciabatta Bread

Yields 2 loaves.

STARTER (DAY 1):
1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
⅛ teaspoon instant yeast
¾ cup water, room temperature

FINAL DOUGH (DAY 2):
2½ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1¾ teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon sugar
⅛ teaspoon instant yeast
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons water, room temperature
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

ON DAY 1:

1 Two days (48 hours) before serving bread, prepare starter by stirring together flour, yeast and water in small bowl. Cover and let stand at room temperature for 24 hours.

ON DAY 2:

2 After 24 hours, prepare final dough by whisking together flour, salt, sugar and yeast in large bowl. Add water, oil and starter, and stir with dough whisk or spoon until mixture just comes together into wet, sticky dough. Cover with plastic wrap; let sit for 19 hours at room temperature.

3 Using wooden spoon, stir dough a couple of strokes. Cover with plastic wrap; let rest for 2 additional hours.

4 Lightly spray 17-by-11-by-1-inch baking sheet with baking spray. Line sheet with parchment paper, and lightly flour (about 1 teaspoon) in spots where loaves will go.

5 Turn dough out onto floured surface and sprinkle with lots of flour. Shape dough into log, and cut in half. Transfer halves to prepared baking sheet, with logs set parallel with short end of pan. Press dough out to 10-by-4-inch rectangles. Dimple surfaces with floured fingertips. Sprinkle each rectangle lightly with flour, then cover with floured tea towel or oil-sprayed plastic wrap. Let rise for 2 hours.

6 About 20 minutes before rise is complete, preheat oven to 450 F.

7 Uncover dough and place in oven on center rack. Reduce oven temperature to 425 F, and bake for about 30 minutes, or until crust is golden. Remove from oven and let cool on wire rack for 1 hour.

8 Store bread, wrapped in aluminum foil, at room temperature for up to 2 days. This bread is best the day it's baked, but can be reheated in a 350-degree oven until it crisps up again, about 10 minutes.

Chocolate Cherry Bread

2½ cups bread flour
½ cup cocoa powder
½ cup dried tart cherries
½ cup bittersweet chocolate chips
¼ cup chopped walnuts
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1¼ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon active dry yeast
½ cup buttermilk
1¼ to 1½ cups cool water
Coarse cornmeal for dusting

Use Bread Baking Method 2 on Page 30.

THE PERFECT POT

I began baking my bread in 5- or 6-quart cast-iron and/or enameled cast-iron Dutch ovens, but my gooey dough didn't seem to fill the expanse of those pots, and I ended up with a flat, sometimes odd-shaped loaf. After stumbling upon a rare 3½-quart enameled cast-iron Dutch oven at my local hardware store, I knew it was the perfect size just by eyeballing it. The bottom was smaller in circumference than the larger pots I was using, and the sides gently curved upward, giving the loaf a more defined shape and some needed rise. The only problem was that doggone plastic knob!

The plastic knobs on the lids of most cast-iron Dutch ovens will melt in a 475-degree oven. Here's a simple fix: Replace it with a metal cabinet- or drawer-type knob from the hardware store. If its screw is too long for the lid, use washers or nip off the end of the screw to secure it tightly.

You can find a selection of 3½-quart cast-iron Dutch ovens online by doing a search; they aren't usually stocked on the shelves of local big-box stores or even specialty cooking stores.

The other unique item on the equipment list (see "Bread Booty" below) is the elusive plastic dough scraper – not to be found in town! Do a web search, and several will turn up on specialty and/or commercial-baking supply sites.

BREAD BOOTY

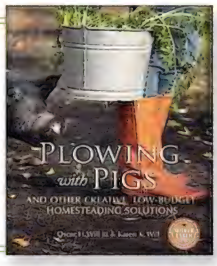
- 3½-quart cast-iron pot with lid and metal knob (do not use a pot with a plastic knob, or it will melt in the oven)
- large mixing bowl
- dry measuring cups
- liquid measuring cup
- measuring spoons
- large rubber spatula
- 2 plastic dough scrapers
- large wooden or glass cutting board
- cotton or linen tea towels
- heavy-duty potholders
- sturdy wood or metal spatula
- cooling rack

A NOTE ON CLEANUP

Let's face it, wet, sticky dough is hard to clean up. Instead of ruining your scrubbers and sponges – and taking the chance of clogging your sink – by attacking the problem directly, use these methods:

- Dirty dough bowl: Swirl a little water in the bowl. Dump it out. Wipe a dry paper towel all around the bowl, picking up all the bits of dough, and discard.
- Tea towels: Pick off bits of dough before laundering.
- Cutting board: Use your plastic dough scrapers to scrape up all the leftover dough bits before cleaning it with soap and water.

Order *Plowing With Pigs and Other Creative, Low-Budget Homesteading Solutions* by Oscar H. Will III and Karen K. Will by visiting www.grit.com/store.



Gluten-Free Bread Baking 101

Discover the importance of gluten in traditional bread baking and how to replace it in these delicious gluten-free bread recipes.

By ELLEN BROWN

The first step in gluten-free bread baking is to understand the role gluten plays in traditional breads. Most bread depends on gluten to succeed; gluten is that versatile protein that, when developed, forms a strong air-trapping network that creates bread's characteristic honeycomb structure and crumb.

In gluten-free breads, the goal is no different. It is, however, more complicated to recreate wheat bread's thick crusts and inside soft, airy pockets without what many would consider a very essential component to what makes bread, well, bread.

While eliminating rye and barley from the gluten-free diet presents some challenges, eliminating all forms of wheat and wheat flour is a Herculean task – especially when baking bread. Wheat flour contains as many as 30 proteins, and two of those proteins – glutenin and gliadin – form gluten when moistened with any liquid ingredient. These two proteins grab water and connect to form elastic strands of gluten. If flour has a lot of these proteins, it grabs up water faster, making the strong and springy gluten that is needed to bake bread; that's why high-protein bread flour is frequently specified in recipes for wheat breads.

The formation of this elastic gluten network serves many functions in a bread dough. Like a net, gluten traps and holds air bubbles created by the natural leavening of yeast or the chemical leavening of baking soda or baking powder. When a dough is baked, the stretched flour proteins become rigid as moisture evaporates from the heat of the oven, and sets the breads' structure.

Replicating this structure is no easy task. There is no magic wand to wave that can remove the gluten from wheat flour, because the proteins are built into the DNA of the wheat plant. However, with the addition of a few other ingredients to non-wheat flours, the results can be just as good.

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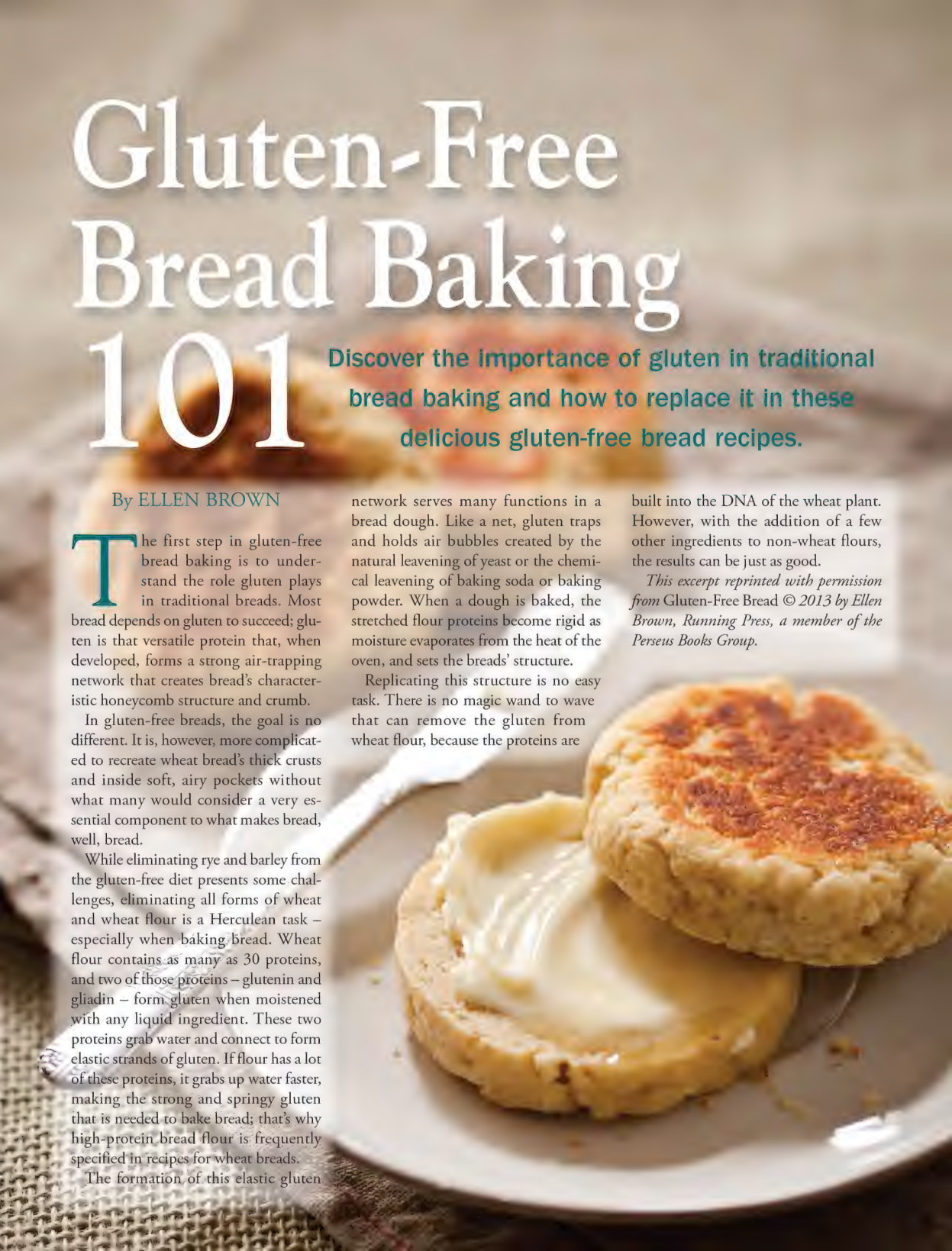

Gluten-Free English Muffins

By Ellen Brown

If you love those nooks and crannies as much as I do, then it's worth the time to make your own English muffins. Like bagels, these rounds of griddled and then baked dough take some time, but the gluten-free version is no more labor intensive than those made with wheat flour. The key to the perfect English muffin is to make them in an egg ring. (I've discovered that cans of tuna are the same size, so if you're fond of tuna salad, remove the top and bottom of the tin with the can opener, and you've got egg rings.) Yields 8 muffins.

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2 tablespoons chia seeds
2¼ teaspoons active dry yeast
2 teaspoons honey
1¼ cups buttermilk, heated to 110 to 115 F
¾ cup millet flour
¾ cup cornstarch
¾ cup tapioca flour
½ cup sorghum flour
¼ cup brown rice flour, plus more for dusting
¼ cup masa harina
2 tablespoons nonfat dried milk powder
2 teaspoons xanthan gum
½ teaspoon fine salt
2 large eggs, room temperature
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled
Cornmeal, for dusting
Vegetable oil, for the griddle

1 Combine chia seeds, yeast, honey and warm buttermilk in bowl of stand mixer fitted with paddle attachment, and mix well. Set aside for about 10 minutes, while yeast proofs.

2 In deep mixing bowl, combine millet flour, cornstarch, tapioca flour, sorghum flour, brown rice flour, masa harina, milk powder, xanthan gum and salt, and whisk well.

3 When yeast mixture looks frothy, add eggs and butter, and mix well. Add dry ingredients, and beat at medium speed until combined. Increase speed to high, and beat for 3 to 5 minutes longer, or until dough is consistency of thick cake batter that would require spreading in cake pan (too thick to pour).

4 Lightly grease inside of large mixing bowl with vegetable oil or softened butter. Scrape dough out of mixer bowl and into greased bowl, smoothing top with moistened fingers or rubber spatula dipped in water. Cover bowl loosely with sheet of oiled plastic wrap or damp tea towel, and place in warm, draft-free spot to allow dough to rise for 1¼ to 1½ hours, or until doubled in bulk.

5 While dough rises, grease 8 egg rings (3 inches in diameter) and dust with brown rice flour. Cover baking sheet with parchment paper or silicone baking mat, and sprinkle with a little cornmeal. Arrange egg rings on baking sheet, and set aside.

6 Punch down dough, then form into 8 equal balls; insert 1 dough ball into each egg ring. Press dough in evenly with your hand, leveling top. Cover baking sheet with sheet of oiled plastic wrap, and allow dough to rise in warm place for 30 minutes, or until muffins are puffy.

7 Preheat oven to 350 F. Lightly grease flat griddle or large skillet, and heat over medium heat.

8 Transfer 4 egg rings to griddle, using greased spatula. Cover egg rings with pot cover or baking sheet, and cook muffins for 5 minutes. Carefully flip egg rings with spatula and tongs, and cook second sides of muffins for an additional 5 to 7 minutes, or until bottoms are browned. Transfer cooked muffins to baking sheet lined with parchment paper or silicone baking mat, and carefully remove rings. Repeat by cooking remaining 4 muffins.

9 Bake muffins for 10 to 12 minutes, or until they sound hollow when tapped on top. Remove muffins from oven and allow to cool for 30 minutes on baking sheet before gently slicing them or splitting them open with fork.

NOTE: The muffins are best the day they are baked, but they can be stored, tightly covered with plastic wrap, in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.

Cornbread and Sausage Stuffing

Cornbread and Sausage Stuffing

By Malorie Harris

My family has always been very traditional when it comes to Thanksgiving. Traditional in the American sense – we have a roasted turkey, stuffing, gravy, green beans and whatnot. We also have our own traditions, meaning we have the same items at the table every year. We always have my great-grandmother's scalloped potatoes, along with plenty of appetizers. No matter the creative ideas for appetizers or side dishes we might

LEFT TO RIGHT: STOVE LEGACY; RACHEL BARENIE

have, you can bet your bottom dollar that the same ones will adorn our table year after year.

The holidays are comforting, as is family and the routine dishes we enjoy. However, change is inevitable – a new dish will someday find a place next to the turkey. Two of us in the family are now gluten-free. A cousin and I adopted the diet after becoming aware of our thyroid issues many years ago.

For me, the hardest holiday food to part with has been stuffing. I'm the girl who reheats leftover stuffing the day after Thanksgiving instead of making a turkey sandwich. It has always been my favorite. Enter a recipe for gluten-free cornbread stuffing.

My grandmother usually makes a traditional stuffing with stale white bread. I could have gone the gluten-free white bread route, but it wasn't the same, so I had to go the other direction. When I tried this recipe, I ate it for lunch for several days. I'll make it again for Thanksgiving, and I'll have no problem eating those leftovers, too.

1 pan prepared gluten-free cornbread, made a day in advance (I used a mix. You can substitute regular cornbread here, if preferred.)
1 cup roughly chopped walnuts
2 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 package (12 ounces) gluten-free pork sausage
1 yellow onion, diced small
2 stalks celery, diced small
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme leaves
2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage leaves
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 eggs, slightly beaten
1½ cups chicken stock
1 cup fresh cranberries
Salt and pepper, to taste

1 Preheat oven to 400 F.

2 Dice cornbread into medium-size cubes and lay out on baking sheet.

3 Sprinkle walnuts around cornbread, and bake for 20 minutes, or until cornbread starts to brown. Cool completely.

Gluten-Free Naan

4 Reduce oven temperature to 350 F.

5 In large skillet, heat butter and olive oil. Add sausage, breaking up as it cooks. When meat begins to brown, add onion and celery, and cook just until onion becomes tender, about 3 minutes. Set aside to cool completely.

6 In large bowl, combine cooled cornbread mixture and cooled sausage mixture. Add thyme, sage, garlic, eggs, chicken stock and cranberries, and season generously with salt and pepper.

7 Spoon mixture into 9-inch square glass baking dish, and cover with foil. Bake for 35 minutes, then remove foil and continue baking for an additional 25 minutes.

Gluten-Free Naan

By Ellen Brown
Yields 8 naan.

Recipe reprinted with permission from Gluten-Free Bread © *2013 by Ellen Brown, Running Press, a member of the Perseus Books Group.*

1½ teaspoons active dry yeast
2 teaspoons granulated sugar
½ cup water, heated to 110 to 115 F
1½ cups brown rice flour, divided, plus more for rolling
½ cup potato starch
½ cup tapioca flour
⅓ cup sweet rice flour
¼ teaspoon gluten-free baking powder
1½ teaspoons xanthan gum
½ teaspoon fine salt
2 large eggs, room temperature
⅔ cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled, divided
¼ cup plain nonfat yogurt

1 Combine yeast, sugar, water and ¼ cup brown rice flour in bowl of stand mixer fitted with paddle attachment, and mix well. Set aside for about 10 minutes, while yeast proofs.

2 Combine remaining brown rice flour, potato starch, tapioca flour, sweet rice flour, baking powder, xanthan gum and salt in deep bowl, and whisk well.

3 When yeast mixture looks frothy, add eggs, ⅓ cup butter, and yogurt. Add dry ingredients, and beat at medium speed until combined. Increase speed to high and beat for 3 to 5 minutes more, or until dough has consistency of thick cake batter that would require spreading in pan (too thick to pour).

4 Lightly grease inside of large mixing bowl with olive oil or butter. Scrape dough out of mixer bowl and into greased bowl, smoothing top with moistened fingers or rubber spatula

Gluten-Free Banana Bread With Blueberries

Recipe by Malorie Harris

Personally, I follow a mostly gluten-free diet. I still love traditional foods, but I currently love finding new ways to make the classics with gluten-free ingredients. The other day I noticed I had a bunch of overripe bananas. As they say, "When life hands you spotted bananas, make banana bread!"

- ¼ cup unsalted butter or coconut oil, melted, plus more for greasing pan
- 2 large eggs
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup
- 3 bananas, mashed
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- ¼ cup coconut flour
- 1 cup gluten-free oat flour
- 2 teaspoons gluten-free baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons ground flaxseed
- 1 cup frozen or fresh blueberries

1 Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease loaf pan with butter or coconut oil, and set aside.

2 In bowl, whisk together butter, eggs, maple syrup, bananas and vanilla until thoroughly combined.

3 In separate bowl, mix flours, baking powder, salt, nutmeg and flaxseed by stirring with fork.

4 Combine mixtures, and stir with spatula or wooden spoon until combined. Fold in blueberries.

5 Turn batter into prepared pan, and bake for about 50 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center of bread loaf comes out clean.

LEFT TO RIGHT: STOVE LEGACY; MALORIE HARRIS

dipped in water. Cover bowl loosely with sheet of oiled plastic wrap or damp tea towel, and place in warm, draft-free spot to allow dough to rise for 1 to 2 hours, or until doubled in bulk.

5 Have bowl of additional rice flour and bowl of tepid water ready on counter. Sprinkle some rice flour on counter.

6 Punch down dough and divide into 8 parts – dough will be sticky. Roll each ball in rice flour as you divide it, then roll out each ball into 7-inch circle.

7 Heat large skillet over high heat for at least 3 minutes, or until almost smoking. Dampen hands in water bowl and rub both sides of 1 piece of naan to lightly dampen it. Place dampened piece of dough in skillet, and cook for 1 minute, or until dough starts to bubble. Turn over with tongs, cover skillet, and cook for 45 seconds to 1 minute more, or until bottom is browned. Remove naan from skillet and brush both sides with remaining melted butter. Repeat with remaining dough balls. Serve hot.

NOTE: The breads can be cooked up to 3 hours in advance and stored at room temperature. Just before serving, reheat them in a skillet placed over medium heat.

Gluten-Free All-Purpose Flour

By Linda J. Amendt

Gluten-Free Breakfast, Brunch and Beyond by Linda J. Amendt offers more than 100 gluten-free recipes – from light, quick breads, biscuits and scones to tasty pancakes, waffles, coffee cakes and sweet rolls. It also includes chapters on frittatas and omelets, quiches, stratas and breakfast casseroles. Yields about 9 cups flour.

Recipe reprinted with permission from Gluten-Free Breakfast, Brunch, & Beyond, *by Linda J. Amendt, published by The Taunton Press in 2003.*

- 4 cups finely ground or stone-ground white rice flour
- 2 cups stone-ground brown rice flour
- 2 cups tapioca flour or tapioca starch
- 1 cup potato starch (not potato flour)

1 In extra-large bowl or container, combine all ingredients, and whisk together until thoroughly blended. Use large spoon to bring flour from bottom of bowl up to top, and whisk again. Repeat a few more times to make sure flours are evenly distributed throughout entire mixture.

2 Store flour in airtight container or zipper-seal storage bags at room temperature for up to 1 month. For longer storage, keep in refrigerator or freezer.

NOTE: Before using the flour, allow it to come up to room temperature, and gently stir it before measuring. To measure the flour, lightly spoon it into desired measuring cup and level off the top with a straight-edged utensil, such as the back of a butter knife.

Gluten-Free Veggie Pizza

By Carol Fenster

Pizza is one of the top foods people miss when they go gluten-free. Gluten-free pizza dough is very soft and sticky, without the elasticity of wheat flour dough, so it is patted into the pan rather than rolled or stretched. Also, the dough adheres to the pan better when it is greased with shortening rather than cooking spray. Yields 6 servings.

Recipe excerpted with permission from Gluten-Free 101 *by Carol Fenster (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014).*

Gluten-Free Veggie Pizza

Pizza Sauce:

1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce
1½ teaspoons dried Italian seasoning
½ teaspoon fennel seeds, optional
¼ teaspoon garlic powder or 1 clove garlic, minced
1 teaspoon sugar
¼ teaspoon salt

Crust:

1 tablespoon active dry yeast
1 teaspoon sugar
¾ cup milk of choice, heated to 110 F
⅔ cup brown rice flour, plus more for sprinkling
¼ cup potato starch
¼ cup tapioca flour
1 teaspoon xanthan gum
1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning
½ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons olive oil
2 teaspoons cider vinegar

Toppings:

1 tablespoon olive oil, for cooking vegetables, plus more for brushing crust, optional
2 cups vegetables (see sidebar at right)
1½ cups shredded mozzarella cheese or cheese alternative

To make pizza sauce:

1 In small, heavy saucepan, combine all sauce ingredients. Simmer, uncovered, for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Set aside.

To make crust:

2 Arrange oven racks in bottom and middle positions of oven. Preheat oven to 400 F. Using shortening or butter (not oil or cooking spray), grease 12-inch nonstick (gray, not black) pizza pan, and set aside.

3 Dissolve yeast and sugar in warm milk for 5 minutes.

4 In food processor, blend all crust ingredients, including yeast mixture, until dough forms ball. Dough will be very soft. (Or, blend in bowl, using electric mixer on low speed, until well-blended.)

5 Put dough in center of prepared pizza pan. Liberally sprinkle some brown rice flour onto dough; press dough into pan with hands, continuing to dust dough with flour to prevent sticking. (At first, it will seem as though there is not enough dough to cover the pan, but it is just the right amount.) Make edges thicker to contain toppings, taking care to make dough as smooth as possible. The smoother you shape the dough, especially around the edges, the prettier the crust will be. Bake for 10 minutes on bottom rack.

To make toppings:

6 Heat oil in skillet over medium heat. Add vegetables that need to be precooked, and cook, stirring frequently, until slightly softened, 3 to 5 minutes.

To put it all together:

7 Remove crust from oven, and brush top with Pizza Sauce. Sprinkle with cheese and arrange vegetables on top.

8 Return pizza to oven, and bake on middle rack until nicely browned, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from oven and cool on wire rack for 5 minutes. Brush crust edges with a little olive oil, if desired. Cut into slices and serve warm.

Vegetables to Use Uncooked

- Artichoke hearts (marinated), thinly sliced
- Olives, sliced or halved
- Fresh plum tomatoes, thinly sliced or diced
- Fresh cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- Sun-dried tomatoes, chopped

Vegetables to Precook

- Asparagus, chopped
- Bell peppers – green, red and/or yellow – thinly sliced
- Broccoli, thinly sliced
- Red or white onion, thinly sliced
- Zucchini, thinly sliced

Jason Wiehe

What's Up With GLUTEN?

Why does it have such a bad rap?

By JENNIFER NEMEC

These days, the phrase "gluten free" seems to be everywhere. I feel like half of my friends stopped eating gluten overnight. We added a gluten-free option at group potlucks, I tried my first rice cracker, and I watched as people who had been fighting health issues started raving about how good they felt. Grocery stores (even in our not-so-metropolitan Kansas town) now have gluten-free aisles. But what is gluten, and why does everyone suddenly want to be free of it?

Gluten is actually an important protein complex in bread and other foods. The Chinese call it "the muscle of flour." Found in wheat and its close relatives, gluten is made up of glutenin and gliadin (in wheat), secalin (in rye), and hordein (in barley). It doesn't dissolve in water, and comes from the endosperm – the starchy part of the seed that provides nutrition for the developing plant.

Gluten plays a celebrated role in bread making. A "gluten network" gives structure and makes the dough elastic enough to rise. Many of the steps in bread making are about creating this network.

Food expert Alton Brown compares the structure of proteins to old-fashioned coiled phone cords. At the beginning of bread making, a gluten molecule is much like a well-used phone cord. It's twisted back on itself, and you're having trouble getting it to stretch at all. Weak bonds have even formed between different areas of the coils to keep it in a folded mass. One way to untangle these cords is to add water; this starts the process and allows the cords to unfold.

Imagine that the ends of these no-longer-tangled cords can attach to one another to form chains. The stretching and folding of kneading allows these now-linear phone cords to align and join together. Once they are side by side, parts of the coils can then connect with each other. You have now created a kind of mesh structure made with chains of coiled gluten proteins in the dough.

During the rising phase, yeast adds carbon dioxide bubbles to the dough, which also assists in the lining up and stretching out of the gluten strands. When you put your bubble-filled gluten mesh into the oven, the heat solidifies the gluten and starch, and the structure of bread is formed.

Gluten is also what makes gravy thick and pasta able to soak up sauce. It's used in some meat substitutes (like seitan), primarily because of its texture and absorbent qualities. These qualities also make it a good culprit for being added to foods that need structure or absorbency – like popsicles and ice cream.

For most of us, gluten is nothing but a regular part of our diet. However, a growing number of people's bodies see gluten as an enemy invader and react accordingly. A genetic, autoimmune disorder known as celiac disease afflicts about one in 133 Americans (or around 3 million people), and an additional 17 million are "gluten-sensitive." In autoimmune disorders, your immune system malfunctions (or functions too well). In this case, a gluten protein triggers the immune system, creating havoc in the small intestine. Once rarely considered, these life-changing diagnoses have become more common as information and testing have become more available.

The treatment for both of these disorders involves removing gluten from your diet. This is not easy because gluten is found in many common foods. As the number of people avoiding gluten has increased, a world of gluten-free foods has hit the shelves.

iSTOCKPHOTO.COM/KAREN SARRAGA

Guide to Whole-Grain BAKING

Use these 10 whole-grain baking techniques without fear of ruining your favorite recipes.

By TABITHA ALTERMAN

When I first started baking with whole grains, my endeavors were limited to replacing some portion of white flour with whole-wheat flour – the easiest introductory step into whole-grain baking. Now I bake almost exclusively with whole-grain flours and use a much wider variety of grains. I don't expect these to be stand-ins for white flour. Instead, I tailor recipes to their individual personalities. Following are some of the time-tested tips I've discovered.

1: Replace white flour with whole wheat

When your aim is to make standard white-flour recipes healthier, the easiest place to start is by substituting whole-wheat flour. Begin your experiments by swapping about a quarter of the white flour with whole-wheat flour, then gradually increase the ratio with each successful recipe.

2: Keep bitterness at bay

If someone in your family is finicky about whole wheat because they say they can detect bitterness, try this:

1. Replace a tablespoon of whatever liquid is in the recipe with orange juice, which balances wheat's tannic flavors.

2. Be absolutely sure your flour is fresh. Whole-grain flours are real, living foods. This means they can go bad. Taste a pinch to make sure it is faintly sweet with no noticeable mustiness or rancidity. Store whole-grain flours in airtight containers in the refrigerator or freezer.

3: Moisture on the mind

All whole-grain flours absorb more liquid than white flour. If you have changed the flour composition of a bread dough to include more whole wheat, for example, it is wise to add extra liquid a bit at a time, keeping in mind that you can always incorporate more liquid later. With other recipes, such as muffins or cookies, just bump the liquid component up a smidgen.

4: Sweet success

Fresh whole-wheat flour is naturally sweeter than white flour. If you are adapting a recipe to include more whole wheat, reduce the recipe's sweetener just a tad. Replace a cup of sugar with a scant cup, for example. Don't overdo it because sugar is usually an important ingredient for structure as well as flavor.

TIM NAUMAN (3)/COURTESY VOYAGEUR PRESS

5: Define your purpose

Breads benefit when made with high-protein "hard" wheats. Pastries and desserts have better textures if prepared with low-protein "soft" wheat. All-purpose flour, bleached or unbleached, is made from a blend of flours to achieve middle-of-the-road protein content that works adequately, but not necessarily best, for many purposes. If you are making a bread, replace the all-purpose flour with either regular whole-wheat flour or ideally with whole-wheat bread flour. If you are making a dessert or pastry, replace the all-purpose flour with regular whole-wheat flour or ideally with whole-wheat pastry flour. If a recipe calls for "cake flour," go with whole-wheat pastry flour.

6: To gluten or not to gluten

You can adapt most recipes with any combination of flours you like as long as you keep their gluten content in mind. For most yeast bread recipes, your combination of flours must include at least half wheat flour for its gluten content. Gluten networks trap air bubbles to help breads rise. Flours that contain enough gluten to help breads rise include hard spring and winter wheat, soft wheat, Kamut, spelt and triticale (a cross of wheat and rye). Flours that contain a little, but not a lot, of gluten include barley, durum, einkorn, emmer and rye.

7: Homemade white flour

White flour has had its nutritious bran and germ mechanically removed. If you look closely at particles of bran, you'll see jagged edges. In soft baked goods, such as cookies and cakes, the potentially destructive effects of jagged edges need not concern us too much. In bread dough and highly structured baked goods, on the other hand, these edges act like tiny razor blades destroying gluten networks, leading to less rise and denser results. If you're worried about compromising the soft, light qualities of a baked good by including whole-wheat flour, consider making your own "white" flour.

Instead of leaving most of the jagged bran inside doughs, I often sift them out and use them to dust the pizza peel where my loaves rise before going into the oven. The crumb remains soft and creamy with plenty of air. Or I find another way to keep the bran in the baked good; for example, sprinkling it into streusel toppings. Sifting out bran is easy: Just dump flour through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl, and voilá!

8: Lighten up

Some people are turned off by the heavier texture of whole-wheat baked goods. This problem is often the result of technique, not ingredients. Many recipes instruct us to sift flour before mixing it into batters and doughs, yet many people ignore this. Sifting incorporates air and helps create light textures; it's especially useful when using naturally heavier whole-grain flours. Sifting dry ingredients also helps distribute baking soda and baking powder evenly – essential for getting the best possible rise.

Old-fashioned flour sifters that you crank or shake to pass flour through sieves work just as well today as they always have. My favorite method for sifting flour, however, is to process it in a food processor with the other dry ingredients. It only takes about five seconds, and you get the added benefit of superfine flour. You can also use a hand mixer or whisk to thoroughly mix and distribute dry ingredients.

9: Worthier wheats

Over the last 50 years, wheat varieties have been bred to increase yield rather than increasing or even preserving inherent nutrition. Donald R. Davis, nutrition scientist at the Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources at Washington State University at Pullman, has written extensively about nutrient losses in wheat, first in 1981 about losses from wheat refining, and more recently about losses from wheat breeding. Breeding has caused substantial declines in copper, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, sulfur and zinc. There are also protein losses, and evidence for declining amounts of phytochemicals. By buying flour from farmers who are committed to providing a product with superior nutrition and flavor, you can subvert this troubling trend. A few of my favorite grain companies are Wheat Montana; Bluebird Grain Farms; Pleasant Hill Grain; Bob's Red Mill; King Arthur Flour; and The Urban Homemaker.

10: Branch out

It is not always necessary to build a network of gluten to make a baked good rise. You can try swapping some of the white flour in a recipe with a nonwheat flour if the recipe contains either baking powder or baking soda, or if it gets its rise from a mixing method that incorporates lots of air bubbles – you can spot these if the instructions require you to cream butter with sugar; to whip cream before incorporating it; or to whip egg whites into soft or stiff peaks before folding them into the batter gently.

Nutritious gluten-free flours include amaranth, buckwheat, corn, millet, oat, quinoa, rice, sorghum and teff.

To reap the biggest dietary benefits, incorporate a number of them into your cooking rotation.

Learn more about the different flour options in "Types of Flour" on Page 42.

White flour's slow decline

The first record of bread was a flatbread made around 6700 B.C. By 3000 B.C., the Egyptians had learned to leaven it. By the time of the Roman Empire, millers could make a version of white flour, which quickly became popular. That white flour, made by sifting out some of the coarsest pieces of bran but retaining most of the healthful germ, was a distant cousin to today's commercial white flour. I love that kind of white flour. I make it all the time.

Homemade white flour – which is actually tan – is not to be confused with today's commercially refined white flour, which contains only about three-quarters of the original wheat that entered the mill, plus some extra junk wheat has never possessed.

What has been removed? Nutritious bran and germ.

What has been added? Chlorine, nitrogen oxide, acetone, peroxide, ascorbic acid and potassium bromate, to name just a few of the 30-plus chemicals that brighten, moisten, condition, aerate, preserve, sweeten, and, sadly, add flavor.

As science learns more about the makeup of a healthy diet, one fact has become clear: Refined grains are bad for our health – and our waistlines. Saying that a grain is "whole" means that it has three essential parts: the endosperm, the bran and the germ. Unlike the refined white flour in processed food and in most of our pantries, in which the nutritious bran and germ have been removed, whole-grain flours contain plenty of fiber, vitamins and minerals, plus healthy plant compounds such as lignans, phytoestrogens and phenolic compounds.

These important nutrients can help us maintain a healthy weight and reduce the risk of numerous diseases, including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, respiratory dysfunction, gout, osteoarthritis and some cancers.

This article is adapted from Whole Grain Baking Made Easy: Craft Delicious, Healthful Breads, Pastries, Desserts and More *by Tabitha Alterman, Voyaguer Press. Order from the* GRIT *Bookstore.*

TYPES OF FLOUR

All of the following flours are exceptionally nutritious (and many are low-gluten or gluten-free). To reap the biggest dietary benefits, try to incorporate a number of them into your cooking rotation. But remember to buy only the quantities you have room to store in your refrigerator or freezer.

AMARANTH FLOUR* has a bold flavor some describe as woody, grassy or malty. Try pairing amaranth flour with other bold ingredients, such as chiles, coffee and pungent spices.

BARLEY FLOUR** was once the main flour used for making bread in Europe. Its flavor is sweet and malty, and it has a moist and creamy quality that comes through in baked goods.

BEAN FLOURS* have varying degrees of starchiness; the flavor is the same as the bean. The most popular is garbanzo bean flour, also called gram flour (don't confuse it with graham flour).

BUCKWHEAT FLOUR* is rich and earthy with a savory or "umami" quality.

CORN FLOUR* is both sweet and bitter, so it pairs well with sweet and savory recipes. Corn flour comes in a range of grittiness, so choose the coarseness you'll want in your product.

MILLET FLOUR* has a mild, cornlike flavor. Use it in recipes where you might use cornmeal.

NUT FLOURS* add moist fat that carries the specific nut flavor into your recipe. The most popular nut flours are almond, chestnut, coconut, hazelnut, pecan and walnut. To make your own, grind shelled nuts (with or without skins) in a food processor, but watch closely. There's a fine line between nut flour and nut butter.

OAT FLOUR* is mild and nutty, and adds tremendous moisture to baked goods. Oats can be used to create various textures, depending whether they are whole, chopped or pulverized.

POTATO FLOUR* is mild-flavored and is usually used to add starch to baked goods.

QUINOA FLOUR* is even more strongly flavored than amaranth, with a touch of bitterness.

RICE FLOUR* can be sticky or not. Short-grain rice tends to create sweeter, stickier flours than those made from long-grain rice.

RYE FLOUR** is similar to oat flour in its ability to add boatloads of moisture to a baked good, but the flavor is wildly different. Rye has a dark, heavy flavor that can be described as fruity.

SEED FLOURS* such as flax seed bring the flavor and oils of the seed into your recipe. For the freshest product, grind seeds yourself in a coffee grinder or food processor.

SORGHUM FLOUR* tastes much like wheat, but a bit sweeter.

TEFF FLOUR* is strong-flavored and malty. It is usually fermented briefly before use, which adds an intense sourness.

WHEAT FLOURS include whole wheat; soft wheat (used to make pastry flour); graham flour (coarsely ground whole wheat); durum (usually made into coarse semolina flour for pasta and pizza); einkorn; farro; spelt; and Kamut. Einkorn and farro are light and refined. Kamut is buttery. Spelt is nutty. Experiment to see which is your favorite. Triticale, another healthful flour, is a cross between rye and wheat.

* Gluten-free ** Low in gluten

MOTHER EARTH NEWS

BREAD

You're sure to discover new loaves to love!

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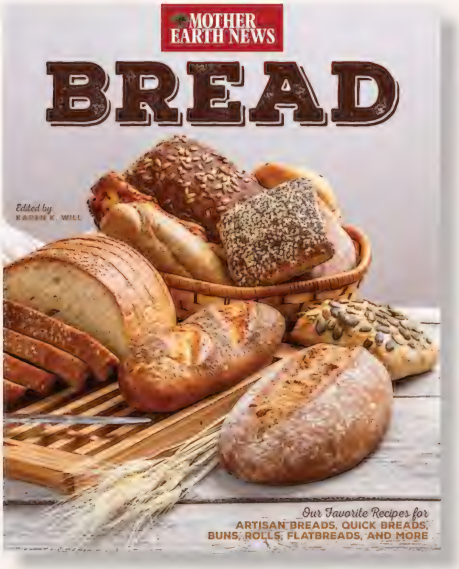

The timeless allure of fresh bread has been part of Mother Earth News (sister publication to *Grit*) since 1970, when the first issue was published. Now, for the first time, we have collected the best recipes and techniques together in one book, *Bread*.

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WHOLE-GRAIN Baking

Great-tasting, nutritious bread, biscuits, muffins and cookies made with whole-grain flours.

Article and photographs by KAREN K. WILL

Believe it or not, baking has been transformed for the better in the past decade. Awareness of whole grains, gluten-free grains, and grain-free flours has permeated the health-conscious market.

According to the Whole Grains Council (WGC), "Whole grains or foods made from them contain all the essential parts and naturally occurring nutrients of the entire grain seed in their original proportions. If the grain has been processed (e.g., cracked, crushed, rolled, extruded, and/or cooked), the food product should deliver the same rich balance of nutrients that are found in the original grain seed." Basically, 100 percent of the original kernel – bran, germ and endosperm – must be present.

The following are examples of the most familiar grains and flours: amaranth*, barley, buckwheat*, corn (including cornmeal and popcorn), millet, oats (including oatmeal), quinoa*, rice (brown rice, colored rice and wild rice), rye, sorghum (also called milo), teff, triticale, wheat (including varieties such as spelt, emmer, farro, einkorn, Kamut®, durum, and forms such as bulgur, cracked wheat and wheatberries).

*Amaranth, buckwheat and quinoa are considered "pseudo-grains" and are normally included with true cereal grains because their nutritional profile, preparation and use are so similar, according to WGC.

Whole wheat

Wheat (*Triticum aestivum; Triticum turgidum*) became a staple grain because it contains gluten, a stretchy protein that enables bread to rise.

Two main varieties of wheat are dominant: Durum wheat (*Triticum turgidum durum*) is made into pasta, and bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum vulgare*) is used for most other wheat foods.

Look for the term "whole wheat" on a product's label to make sure you're getting all the bran, germ and endosperm.

Einkorn

Einkorn (*Triticum monococcum L.*) is considered an "ancient" wheat and the oldest variety available today. With its hard-to-thresh hull, it was abandoned as a mainstream crop. It's still grown in Europe, sometimes in marginally fertile areas. More recently, farmers in Washington state and elsewhere are bringing drought-tolerant einkorn back into production in the United States. Studies show that compared to modern wheat, it is higher in protein, phosphorus, potassium and beta-carotene, among other nutrients.

Olive Oil Orange Bread

Yields 1 loaf.

1 cup all-purpose einkorn flour
1 cup spelt or whole-wheat flour
½ cup almond flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
Zest and juice of 2 oranges
½ cup agave nectar

½ cup whole milk
⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
3 large eggs
1 tablespoon sliced almonds

1 Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease 8-by-4-inch loaf pan.
2 In medium bowl, combine flours, baking powder, baking soda and salt.
3 In separate large bowl, beat orange zest and juice, agave nectar, milk, olive oil and vanilla with electric mixer on low speed until well-mixed.
4 Add dry ingredients, and beat at low speed until combined. Add eggs, and continue beating for 2 minutes.
5 Pour batter into prepared pan and sprinkle sliced almonds over top.
6 Bake for 45 minutes, or until toothpick comes out clean. Cool completely in pan on wire rack.

Spelt

Spelt (*Triticum aestivum spelta*) is also considered an "ancient" variety of wheat that was widely cultivated until the varieties more compatible with modern fertilizers and mechanical harvesting took over. Spelt is higher in protein than common wheat, and anecdotal reports indicate it is more tolerable to people with wheat sensitivities. Spelt flour can be substituted for common wheat in most recipes.

Spelt Gingerbread

Yields 1 cake.

2 cups spelt flour
1½ teaspoons baking soda
1½ teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon minced fresh ginger
2 eggs
¾ cup coconut palm sugar
½ cup molasses
½ cup boiling water
¼ cup melted coconut oil
¼ cup melted butter
1 teaspoon confectioner's sugar

1 Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease and flour 9-inch square or round cake pan.

2 In bowl, sift together flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon and sea salt.
3 In another bowl, mix together minced ginger, eggs, sugar and molasses. Mix into dry ingredients. Pour boiling water over batter, and beat with electric mixer on low speed until smooth. Beat in coconut oil and butter until blended.
4 Pour batter into prepared pan, and bake for 35 to 40 minutes, or until springy to the touch. Cool on wire rack thoroughly, and then turn out onto serving platter and dust with confectioner's sugar. Slice and serve.

Rye

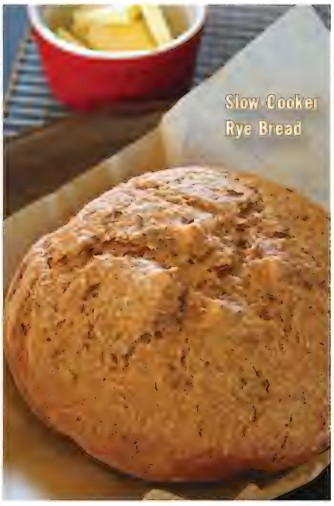
In the past, rye (*Secale cereale*) was seen as a weed. However, because it has the ability to grow in areas too wet or cold for other grains, it became a traditional part of cuisine in Northern Europe and Russia, followed by colonial America.

Unlike other grains, rye contains a high level of fiber in its endosperm, not just in its bran. Because of this, breads and crackers made with rye flour have a lower glycemic index than products made from wheat and most other grains; a good choice for diabetics and people trying to stabilize blood sugar levels.

Slow-Cooker Rye Bread

Who knew you could make bread in a slow cooker? Yields 1 loaf.

¾ cup warm water
1 tablespoon honey
2¼ teaspoons active dry yeast



1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons caraway seeds
2 teaspoons fennel seeds
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1¾ cups all purpose organic einkorn flour, plus more for dusting
¾ cup rye flour

1 In large bowl, whisk together warm water, honey and yeast, and let stand for 10 minutes, or until foamy.
2 Stir in salt, caraway and fennel seeds, olive oil and flours, and form into ball.
3 Turn dough out on lightly floured surface and knead for 5 to 10 minutes, or until smooth, adding more flour to prevent sticking.
4 Place dough ball in lightly oiled bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Set aside and let rise for 1 hour.
5 Turn out dough and knead again for 1 to 2 minutes, forming ball. Place dough on sheet of parchment paper and place in 4-quart slow cooker.
6 Cover and cook on high for 2 to 2½ hours. Lift bread out and cool on wire rack for at least 1 hour before slicing.

Sorghum

Sorghum (*Sorghum spp.*) is another ancient cereal grain that dates back 8,000 years ago to southern Egypt. Sorghum was domesticated in Africa, where it remains an important cereal grain today. It is believed to have arrived in the Americas with slave traders from Africa in the 19th century.

Sorghum's hull is edible so it's eaten

with all its outer layers, thereby retaining the majority of its nutrients. It's gluten-free and offers other nutritional benefits.

Some specialty sorghums are high in antioxidants, known for myriad health benefits, such as reducing cancer and heart disease risks. In addition, the wax surrounding the sorghum grain contains compounds called policosanols, which some researchers believe have the ability to lower cholesterol.

Sorghum flour has a neutral, sometimes sweet flavor that allows it to be substituted for wheat flour in most baked goods. Sorghum is digested more slowly and has a lower glycemic index.

Whole-Wheat Sorghum Biscuits

Yields 12 biscuits.

1 cup whole-wheat or spelt flour
¾ cup sorghum flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
¾ teaspoon salt
½ cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1 stick butter, cold, cut into cubes
1 tablespoon honey
½ cup whole milk

1 Preheat oven to 450 F.
2 In large bowl, whisk together flours, baking powder and salt. Stir in cheese.
3 Using pastry blender, cut in butter until varied-sized meal forms.
4 In small bowl, combine honey and milk. Stir into flour mixture, and mix gently, just until dough comes together.
5 On lightly floured surface, roll out dough into ¾-inch-thick rectangle.
6 Using sharp knife, cut dough into 12 equal-size squares, and place on ungreased baking sheet.
7 Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until squares are golden brown.

Oats

Oats (*Avena sativa*) are unique among grains in that they almost never have their bran and germ removed in processing. In the United States, "old-fashioned" oats refer to those that have been steamed and flattened; regular oats, quick oats and instant oats have also undergone the same process, just to different degrees – the more flattened and steamed, the quicker they cook and the softer they become.

Scientific studies have shown that oats (and barley) contain a special kind of fiber called beta-glucan that is effective in helping to lower cholesterol. Research also indicates that oats contain a unique antioxidant – avenanthramides – that helps protect blood vessels from the damaging effects of LDL cholesterol.

Multigrain Chewy Cookies

Yields 18 large cookies.

1½ cups old-fashioned oats
1 cup stone-ground whole-wheat flour
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1½ sticks butter, softened or melted
1 cup coconut palm sugar
2 eggs
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup chopped pecans
½ cup unsweetened shredded or flake coconut
¾ cup bittersweet chocolate chips or dried fruit (such as cranberries or cherries, or a combination)

1 Preheat oven to 350 F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper or Silpat; set aside.
2 In medium bowl, combine oats, flour, baking soda and salt.
3 In large bowl, cream butter and sugar until smooth, 3 to 4 minutes with electric mixer. Beat in eggs and vanilla, and then add dry ingredients. Stir in pecans, coconut and chocolate chips (batter will be very thick).
4 Using ¼-cup measuring cup, drop cookies onto prepared baking sheets, and bake for about 16 minutes, or until edges are browned. Rotate baking sheets from upper to lower racks and front to back, halfway through baking time.
5 Let cookies cool on baking sheets for 5 minutes before transferring to wire rack to cool completely.

Buckwheat

The nutrients and nutty flavor of buckwheat have led this "pseudo-grain" to be accepted into the family of grains. Buckwheat is actually a cousin of rhubarb, botanically speaking, and not technically a grain at all. Its popularity throughout history is due to the fact that buckwheat tolerates poor soil, grows well on rocky hillsides, and thrives without chemical pesticides.

Health benefits include high levels of an antioxidant called rutin, and studies show that it improves circulation and prevents LDL cholesterol from blocking blood vessels.

Buckwheat-Spelt Chocolate Chip Cookies

To make these cookies gluten-free, substitute your favorite all-purpose gluten-free flour mix for the spelt flour. Yields about 3 dozen cookies.

½ cup almond meal
½ cup buckwheat flour
1½ cups spelt, einkorn or whole-wheat flour
1 teaspoon aluminum-free baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon sea salt
1 cup bittersweet chocolate chips
¼ cup melted coconut oil
¼ cup melted butter
½ cup pure maple syrup or agave nectar*
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup water
*If you choose to use agave nectar instead of maple syrup, add 1 teaspoon maple extract.

1 Preheat oven to 350 F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper or Silpat, and set aside.
2 In large bowl, combine almond meal, flours, baking powder, baking soda, sea salt and chocolate chips.
3 In separate bowl, whisk together coconut oil, butter, maple syrup, vanilla and water. Add to dry ingredients, and mix well. Let dough set for 5 minutes.
4 Spoon heaping tablespoons dough 2 inches apart onto prepared baking sheets. Flatten with back of a spoon, and bake for 10 to 11 minutes, or until tops are lightly browned. Cool on wire rack.

Quinoa

Quinoa (*Chenopodium quinoa*) is another "pseudo-grain" that is a relative of Swiss chard and beets. Long cultivated by the Inca people in the Andes Mountains, quinoa is a small, round grain that is either white, red, purple or black. Though much of the quinoa sold in the United States is imported from South America, farmers in high-altitude areas near the U.S. Rocky Mountains are now growing quinoa.

Quinoa is high in protein and is a complete protein.

Quinoa flour can be found in the natural foods section of supermarkets. To make your own, grind raw quinoa in a clean coffee grinder. (To clean a coffee grinder, grind white rice in it.)

Quinoa-Almond Pumpkin Muffins

Yields 12 muffins.

1 cup quinoa flour
½ cup almond flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1½ teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
½ teaspoon sea salt
½ cup puréed pumpkin
¼ cup crunchy almond butter
3 large eggs
½ teaspoon almond extract
¼ cup melted butter or coconut oil

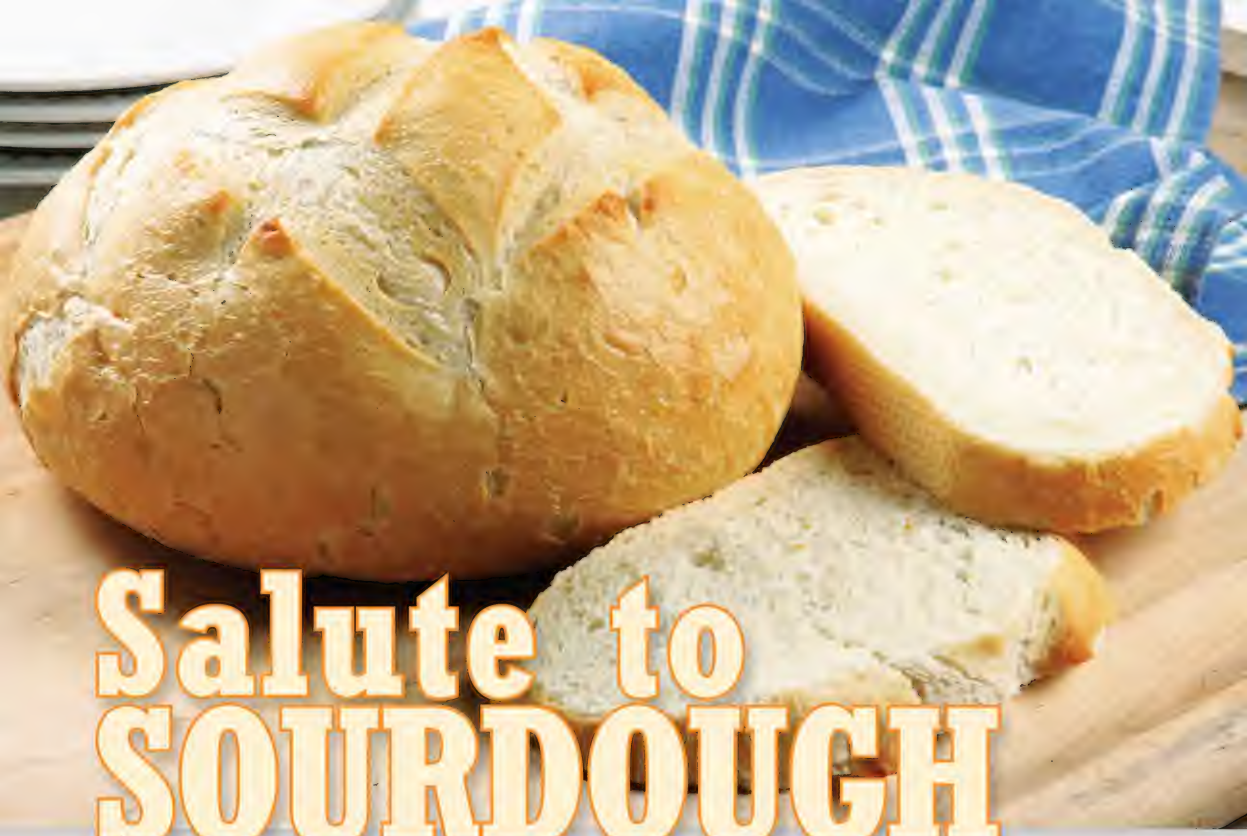
½ cup agave nectar
1 tablespoon sliced almonds, or 12 whole pecans

1 Preheat oven to 350 F. Coat muffin tins with melted coconut oil, or line with paper liners.
2 In large bowl, mix together flours, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, pumpkin pie spice and salt.
3 In another bowl, mix pumpkin, almond butte, eggs, almond extract, butter and agave nectar. Add to dry ingredients, and mix well.
4 Pour batter evenly into prepared tins, and top with sprinkling of sliced almonds or a whole pecan.
5 Bake on middle rack for 20 minutes, or until toothpick inserted near center comes out clean.

HEALTHFUL ALTERNATIVES

Consider substituting these ingredients for white sugar, white flour and vegetable oils.

- *Agave nectar:* An extract created from the sap of a desert plant, agave nectar is a natural, low-glycemic (index between 15 and 21) sweetener. It is three times sweeter than white sugar. Substitute ½ to ¾ cup for 1 cup sugar; reduce liquid by 2 tablespoons for each cup.
- *Pure maple syrup:* A natural, mineral-rich sweetener. Though not low on the glycemic index, maple syrup is more nutritious and delivers a rich, appealing flavor. It is sweeter than sugar so substitute ¾ cup for 1 cup sugar; reduce liquid by 2 tablespoons for each cup.
- *Coconut palm sugar:* Made from the nectar of coconut flowers, coconut palm sugar is considered low glycemic (index about 35) and has a rich, caramel flavor that is less sweet than white sugar and is packed with vitamins, minerals and amino acids. It's easy to substitute for white sugar because it's sold in crystalline form. Substitute equal amount in recipes.
- *Almond meal:* Nut meal/flour is a perfect nutritious substitution for grain flours in baked goods. Look for finely ground almond meal, and always sift before using.
- *Virgin/extra-virgin coconut oil:* An extremely healthful fat, coconut oil is derived from the meat of mature coconuts. Composed mostly of beneficial medium-chain fatty acids, coconut oil resists oxidation and rancidity. It's high in lauric acid, which helps strengthen the immune system. Coconut oil is solid at temperatures below 70 F. When chilled, it can be used as a substitute for shortening or butter in baked goods. When melted, it can be substituted for any kind of oil in recipes.



Salute to SOURDOUGH

Cook up some hearty and delicious pioneer fare in your kitchen.

By KAREN K. WILL

My love for sourdough began suddenly one day while out hunting in antique stores. A shop owner in Paxico, Kansas, said she had just received a truckload of old cookbooks, and she suggested I might want to have a look. Might I? She had no idea who she was dealing with!

For the next couple of hours, I pored through the stacks, and when I pulled out a smallish, red book from 1976 called *Alaska Sourdough: The Real Stuff by A Real Alaskan* by Ruth Allman (Alaska Northwest Publishing Co., Anchorage), I held it up in a "Eureka!" moment. This charming, handwritten book (literally handwritten by the author, and mass-produced by the publisher) spoke to me. My grandfather was an Alaska Native, and after spending time on "the last frontier," I came to cherish both the Native culture and that rugged pioneer spirit. Also, being a fervent baker, I had wanted to investigate sourdough for some time. All of that, together with my love for "real food," converged, and I started on my sourdough odyssey.

Sourdough slims

One of Webster's definitions for a "sourdough" is "a prospector or settler in the Western United States or Canada, especially one living alone: so called because their staple was sourdough bread." Sourdough, the food, is a fermented dough and traditional pioneer food of mining camps, chuck wagons, and those living on the trail. It was known as the best food for energy because of its protein content; according to Allman, tests have shown that sourdough contains the greatest amount of protein for its weight and size of any comparable food.

Sourdough was common in pioneer days because yeast was extremely hard to come by, and when it was available, it was almost always "dead" from exposure to extreme conditions. Dead yeast resulted in baking failures that were a grievous waste of vital supplies. Sourdough became the standard because it could be controlled and kept alive, and it was always dependable.

How to make a sourdough starter

The best way to get started with sourdough is to acquire a small quantity from an active pot. My husband gave me a small jar of starter as a gift; he got it from a friend who got it from a pig farmer in the Italian province of

Le Marche, where it has been used as the village starter for at least 100 years. (There will always be great lore surrounding sourdough starter, for people love their sourdough!)

In lieu of tapping an Italian pig farmer, make your own. According to Allman, it's this simple:

"Mix a rich, thick potato water with flour and a spoonful or two of sugar, and you have the beginnings of a Sourdough Pot. Keep it in a warm place, and it will begin to ferment. A 'wild yeast' develops. The sourdough is beginning to work, emitting a profusion of small, effervescent bubbles. Thus, you have created the 'Bubbling Sourdough.' Truly this is a miracle worker. Transforming what was apparently a starch food into a protein dynamo!"

Here's a more-specific recipe:

2 cups thick potato water
2 tablespoons sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour

To make thick potato water, boil potatoes with skins until they fall apart in the pot. Remove skins, and mash potatoes into a purée. Cool for 1 hour. Add water until you have a soupy liquid.

To make starter, place potato water, sugar and flour in a crock, and beat by hand until you have a smooth, creamy batter (similar to pancake batter). Cover with a clean cotton or linen cloth, and fasten with a rubber band around the top. Set aside in a warm place for 3 days to begin fermentation.

Starter can be used after 3 days, but it's best to wait a few more days. Add fuel in the form of equal parts flour and water (start with ¼ cup), and a spoonful of sugar. Mix well, making sure to get out any lumps. Put back in a warm spot to keep fermenting. Your sourdough should develop a pleasant, sour aroma.

Once your sourdough is established, feed it daily, or every other day, depending on how often you use it, with equal parts flour and water. (I've been told to use only white flour or you run the risk of turning it rancid.) Each time you use your sourdough, feed it before stowing it away. Feeding is really more of an art than a science. I have not found the definitive source on how often to feed it; just use your baking intuition and your sense of smell. Make sure to feed it often enough to keep it bubbling and fermenting, but not so often that you have an unusable quantity, having wasted lots of flour. If your pot is becoming too full and you won't be using your sourdough for a few days, give half to a friend, and feed small doses of flour to the remaining half to increase its volume gradually.

Stir it every day to aerate, regardless of whether you're feeding it or not. Never use a metal spoon, as metal causes a chemical reaction with the sourdough.

No-Knead Sourdough Bread

This is a "San Francisco-style" sourdough loaf, with a crackly crust and a chewy texture. It requires my no-knead method described in detail in the article beginning on Page 28. Be sure to read the full instructions there first, as they have been shortened below. Yields 1 loaf.

3½ cups all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon active dry yeast
1¾ teaspoons salt
⅔ cup sourdough starter
1½ cups water
Coarse cornmeal, for dusting

1. Combine flour, yeast and salt in large mixing bowl, and whisk to blend.
2. Combine sourdough starter and water in large mixing cup; add to flour mixture, and mix with rubber spatula until you have a thoroughly mixed, wet, sticky mass of dough.
3. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature for 12 to 18 hours.
4. After at least 12 hours have passed, your dough should be dotted with bubbles and more than doubled in size. Dust wooden cutting board with bread flour. Scrape dough loose from sides of bowl and turn out dough onto board in 1 piece. The dough will be loose and sticky, but do not add more flour. Dust top lightly with flour, and cover with clean cotton or linen tea towel. Let dough rise 1 to 2 hours more.
5. About 30 minutes before second rise is complete, place 3½-quart cast-iron Dutch oven (oval-shaped gives best results) on rack positioned in middle of oven. Preheat oven to 450 F.
6. Once oven has reached 450 F, remove pot and sprinkle about 1 teaspoon coarse cornmeal evenly over bottom of pot.
7. Uncover dough and, using 2 plastic dough scrapers, shape dough into a ball by folding it over onto itself a few times. With scrapers, lift dough carefully and let it fall into heated pot by slowly separating scrapers. Dust top of dough with a bit of coarse cornmeal. Cover pot, and bake for 35 minutes.
8. Remove cover from pot, rotate, and continue baking, uncovered, for an additional 15 minutes, or until bread is nicely browned.
9. Remove pot from oven. With sturdy wooden or metal spatula, pry loaf from pot and transfer to cooling rack. Let cool for 1 hour before slicing.

A sourdough loaf can turn a ho-hum sandwich into a culinary masterpiece.

LEFT TO RIGHT: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/JACK PICCOO; KAREN K. WILL

Sourdough Potato Bread

Recipe and photo by Renee Pottle

Recently we had a bout of cool, stormy, spring weather. Cool weather always makes me hunger for homemade bread, particularly sourdough bread. And since my foodie granddaughter and I had recently made a beautiful batch of sourdough carrot bread (http://bit.ly/24vZ7j5), the starter was bubbling away waiting for a new creation.

There are a few breads that I make over and over; Sourdough Oatmeal Bread (Page 12; http://bit.ly/1pYqUZG) and Greek Country Bread (http://bit.ly/24nBvAt) come to mind. But usually I like to experiment and try something new. So this time it was light sourdough potato bread. Like most potato breads, this one was soft and moist, but it also had a nice crusty surface. The sourdough starter added tangy flavor that usually isn't present in potato bread.

Make Your Own Starter

There are many ways to make a sourdough starter. I personally prefer to use the method found on my website, Make Your Own Sourdough Starter (http://bit.ly/1Z8zkK9). Over the years, Mother Earth News has published several articles about making sourdough starter, including "Creating Homemade Sourdough Bread From a Starter Mix" (http://bit.ly/1NjkwYA), and a previous blog post, "A Beginner's Guide to Sourdough" (http://bit.ly/1WFZ4hZ). No matter which method is used, your starter will eventually be populated with the local wild yeasts found in your particular geographical area. You may start with a dried starter purchased on your San Francisco vacation, but after a few weeks that starter will be less San Francisco sourdough and more Peoria sourdough or Austin sourdough. That isn't a bad thing. San Francisco may be famous for their sourdough breads, but I guarantee that your bread will be delicious too.

Sourdough Potato Bread

1 large Russet potato
2 tablespoons melted butter
¾ cup potato cooking water
2 cups sourdough starter
3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
2½ cups Kamut flour
1 teaspoon salt

1. Peel and dice potato. Boil until tender. Drain and reserve ¾ cup cooking water.
2. Mash potato and let cool to room temperature.
3. In large bowl or stand mixer bowl, combine cooled potato, butter, cooled cooking water, and sourdough starter.
4. Stir in flours and salt. Knead until smooth and elastic, about 8 to 10 minutes, adding more flour if necessary to prevent excess sticking. Dough should be soft and somewhat sticky. Be careful to not add too much additional flour; you only want enough to make the dough manageable.
5. Form dough into ball, place in greased bowl, cover and let rise in warm place until doubled, 2 to 4 hours. Gently deflate dough, shape, cover and let rise another hour.

NOTE: I shaped my loaf into a round and let it rise in a brotform, but it will work well in a traditional loaf pan too. The soft dough does need some sort of structure though, so it will not work well to let it rise in a freeform shape.

6. Preheat oven to 400 F. Slash top of loaf and bake on hot stone for 40 minutes, or until internal temperature reaches 205 degrees.
7. Remove from oven and let cool on wire rack for at least 15 minutes before slicing. Enjoy!

Sourdough Sandwich Bread

Recipe by Tammy Kimbler

Activate your sourdough starter by taking out ½ cup starter, mixing it with ½ cup water and ½ cup flour. The next day, take out ½ cup starter and do it all over again, discarding the remaining starter or using it as filler in pancakes or other breads with regular yeast or baking powder. After five days your starter should be good and bubbly. Once it strongly bubbles within a few hours of feeding, you're good to go. This recipe takes 16 to 20 hours to ferment, rise and bake.

- ½ cup active sourdough starter
- 1 cup water
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2½ cups whole wheat white flour; more for kneading

1 The night before, combine all ingredients in bowl and beat with spoon until sticky dough forms. Turn into oiled bowl, flipping over once to cover both sides. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and let ferment overnight.

2 The next morning, about 8 to 12 hours later, dump dough onto well-floured counter and knead until a smooth elastic dough, adding flour as needed. You could add as much as an additional cup flour. Let dough rest for 15 minutes, then form into loaf. Grease loaf pan, and add dough. Cover pan and let dough rise until double.

3 Preheat oven to 350 F with rack placed in upper middle part of oven. Bake for 30 to 45 minutes, or until bread reaches internal temp of 190 degrees or so. Turn bread out on cooling rack. Try to let it cool before you slice it, if you can.

No-Knead Sourdough Chocolate Bread

Sourdough and bittersweet chocolate may be an unexpected pairing, but it's a delicious one. The "ancient grain" spelt imparts a nutty flavor, in addition to nutrients and fiber. Spelt flour can be found in the health-food or natural-food sections of supermarkets (Bob's Red Mill is a common brand). Make this loaf for French toast for a special occasion. Yields 1 loaf.

- 1 cup bread flour
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup spelt flour
- ½ teaspoon active dry yeast
- 1¼ teaspoons salt
- ¾ teaspoon sugar
- ¾ cup chopped bittersweet chocolate chips
- ½ cup sourdough starter
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons water
- Coarse cornmeal, for dusting

1 In large bowl, whisk together flours, yeast, salt, sugar and chocolate.

2 Combine sourdough starter and water in large mixing cup; add to flour mixture, and mix with rubber spatula until you have a thoroughly mixed, wet, sticky mass of dough.

3 Cover bowl with plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature for 12 to 18 hours.

4 After 12 to 18 hours, dough should be dotted with bubbles and more than doubled in size. Scrape dough loose from sides of bowl and turn out in 1 piece onto cutting board dusted with bread flour. The dough will be loose and sticky, but do not add more flour. Dust top lightly with flour, and cover with cotton or linen tea towel. Let dough rise for another 1 to 2 hours.

5 About 30 minutes before second rise is complete, place 3½-quart cast-iron Dutch oven (oval-shaped gives best results) on rack positioned in middle of oven, and preheat oven to 450 F.

6 Once oven has reached 450 F, remove pot and sprinkle about 1 teaspoon coarse cornmeal evenly over bottom of pot.

7 Uncover dough and, using 2 plastic dough scrapers, shape dough into ball by folding it over onto itself a few times. With scrapers, lift dough and let it fall into preheated pot by slowly separating scrapers. Dust top of dough with coarse cornmeal. Cover pot and bake for 30 minutes.

8 After 30 minutes, remove cover from pot, rotate, and continue baking for 10 minutes more, or until top of loaf is nicely browned.

9 Remove pot from oven. With sturdy wooden or metal spatula, pry loaf from pot and transfer to cooling rack. Allow bread to cool for at least 1 hour before slicing.

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: RENEE POTTLE; TAMMY KIMBLER; KAREN K. WILL

Sourdough Biscuits

These biscuits are easy and fun to make – they can even be covered and baked over coals in the great outdoors, pioneer-style. They have that characteristic flaky crust (enhanced when you use lard) and soft, tart insides. Yields 3 dozen biscuits.

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups sourdough starter
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon honey
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 tablespoons lard or butter, cold, cut into small pieces
2 tablespoons butter, melted

1 Heat oven to 350 F. Grease 10-inch cast-iron skillet; set aside.
2 In large bowl, mix flour, starter, salt, honey, baking powder and lard until soft dough forms.
3 Pinch off egg-sized pieces and roll between palms to form a ball. Place dough balls, touching, around edge of skillet in concentric circles until filled. Brush tops with melted butter. Set skillet in warm spot for 10 minutes to allow biscuits to rise.
4 Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, or until golden brown. Serve hot with butter and honey.

Sourdough Blueberry Muffins

These muffins are a delightful cross between a biscuit and a muffin, with a unique texture and bright flavor, thanks to the lemon zest. I use dried blueberries in this recipe, like the "Sourdoughs" would have done in their day, and find that the berries impart a pleasing chewiness. You can soak the berries in hot water for a few minutes to soften, but it's not absolutely necessary. Or use fresh berries, if preferred. Yields 12 muffins.

- 1 cup sourdough starter
- 1 egg
- 4 tablespoons butter, melted and cooled
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 cup blueberries

1. Preheat oven to 400 F. Coat 12 muffin cups with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.
2. In bowl, combine starter, egg, butter, sugar and lemon zest.
3. In another bowl, sift together flour, baking soda and baking powder; fold into sourdough mixture just until moistened. Do not beat or over mix.
4. Dust berries with a little additional flour, and gently fold into batter.
5. Divide batter evenly among muffin cups. Bake for about 25 minutes. Serve warm with butter and blueberry preserves.

Karen K. Will (3)

The Sourdough Pot

It's a tough call deciding what to use as your sourdough pot – something ever-present on the countertop that you will interact with on an almost-daily basis. It's important to never use any kind of metal pot or spoon with sourdough – it causes all the sourdough enzymes to work overtime in a chemical reaction.

My trusty sourdough pot is a robin's-egg blue, 1-quart ceramic crock with a lip that runs around the top – perfect for holding that rubber band in place. I bought it from a ceramic artisan at a festival in Missouri, and the size is just perfect for the amount of sourdough I use regularly. Good crocks of various sizes can also be found online; traditional 1-gallon Ohio Stoneware crocks can be purchased from retailers like Do It Best or Sears. Upscale ones can be found from Le Creuset, and unique, one-of-a-kind crocks can be found on Etsy.com.

A Bit About Sugar

Sugar is important in sourdough recipes, but only in small quantities – a couple spoonfuls at most. Sugar will render your baked goods a beautiful golden brown, but too much sugar will toughen the dough and result in a leathery texture. In addition, baking soda sweetens sourdough, so don't over-sugar your recipes.

Bread Starters for EVERYONE

Friendship breads and sourdough recipes rely on a diverse mix of fermenting mixtures.

By GRIT STAFF

Sharing the starter for Amish Friendship Bread is more about friendship than it is about baking. If you have ever received a cup of the starter for this deliciously sweet bread – or its cake counterpart – you know what it's all about. A friend reaches out. You then bake the bread for your family, compare notes with your friend, and finally pass the starter on to other friends. It's a happy web of family, friends and food.

The starter for Friendship Bread is a sourdough starter. Since the bread has so much sugar added, the tangy sourdough taste is pretty subtle.

The recipes are as varied as the people doing the sharing. We have starters with only flour, sugar and water. Others substitute milk for the water. There are starters with fruit, and starters that take five days to mature while others take up to 10 days or more. Some people say use only wooden utensils and ceramic or glass bowls, avoiding metal at any cost; others say don't worry about the metal.

Everlasting yeast

Janet Archer, Seiling, Oklahoma, is searching for either a start of or a recipe for everlasting yeast. "This is not sourdough but a yeast that you save back some, to maintain your start, each time you use it. You put about a half cup in a jar and cover it with white sugar, put the lid on, and put it in the refrigerator for the next use."

Susan Lewis, Pekin, Illinois, sends this version of the old-fashioned recipe.

4 medium potatoes
4 tablespoons sugar

1 Boil potatoes until tender; drain, and save water. Run potatoes through fruit press or sieve.

2 To potatoes, add enough potato water to make ⅔ quart. Mix in sugar.

3 Set in warm place until mixture ferments and bubbles form on top.

4 Use 1 cup each time you bake.

5 Replenish yeast by adding potato water and sugar as needed. Store in tightly covered glass jar in cool place.

Additional starters

Sourdough Bread Starter With Wild Yeast

Wild yeast from the air begins the process for this sourdough starter.

2 cups flour
2 cups water
2 teaspoons sugar

1 Mix all ingredients thoroughly in crockery container. Cover with towel and store in warm place, stirring at least once a day. Wild yeast is present in the air, so the starter will start bubbling and develop a yeasty smell in 3 to 7 days.

iStockphoto.com/TheKevin

2 Sourdough can be contrary, though, and sometimes fails to ripen. If you don't mind cheating, add half a packet dry yeast to the flour-water-sugar mixture, and it'll be ready the following day.

3 Whenever you use your sourdough starter, the amount taken out should be replaced by an equal amount of the flour-water mixture. And, yes, you can store starter, covered, in the refrigerator.

Sourdough Bread With Starter

Sourdough Starter:

2 cups thick potato water
2 tablespoons sugar
2 cups (more or less) flour

Sourdough Bread:

2 cups Sourdough Starter
¼ cup sugar
1 cup warm potato water
3 tablespoons cooking oil
5 cups (more or less) flour, divided
½ teaspoon salt

To make Sourdough Starter:

1 Boil 1 or 2 potatoes in jackets until they fall to pieces. Remove jackets, mash potatoes, and allow to cool. Add additional water to make sufficient liquid, if needed.

2 Put all starter ingredients in pot or crock, and beat until smooth. Cover and set in warm place to ferment. Can be used in 3 days, but is better if allowed to ripen longer. As starter is used, it will need to be replaced.

To make Sourdough Bread:

3 Mix together Sourdough Starter, sugar, potato water and oil. Mix in half the flour. Set in warm place until doubled in size.

4 Add salt and enough remaining flour to make dough smooth, elastic and easy to handle. Place in greased bowl; cover and let rise in warm place until doubled in size.

5 Knead down; let rise until doubled in size again. Form loaves; slash tops.

Renee Pottle: Page 56, left to right, iStockphoto.com (2)/Thomas Arbour, feverpitched

Extra Sourdough Starter?

By Renee Pottle

Too much sourdough starter? Starter bubbling away in jars on the counter top? Starter patiently waiting its turn in the refrigerator? Even after turning cups of the stuff into beautiful loaves of homemade bread, there's always more casting an accusing eye and asking, "What are you going to do with me – and when am I getting fed?!"

If you are a sourdough bread baker, it's sure to happen sooner or later. Keeping our starter alive means feeding it, and feeding it leads to too much starter. It seems so wasteful to throw out part of it. Luckily, we don't have to toss part of our starter just to keep the rest alive. We can:

- Add sourdough starter to quick breads and other products leavened by baking powder or baking soda.
- Add starter to straight yeast dough, giving resulting bread more flavor and keeping it fresh for a longer time.
- Use starter as a flavoring agent, not a leavening agent, in cookies, crackers and pizza.
- Share the love. Gift a cup of ripe starter, along with feeding directions, to your friends.
- Dry it for future use, or to give as a gift.

Pancakes and Other Griddle Breads

Sourdough has been used to leaven pancakes for centuries. But sourdough starter can also be added to crumpets, English muffins, and other griddle breads as a flavoring agent while giving a little leavening "boost."

Muffins and Quick Breads

Up to 1 cup starter can be added to any standard (2 cups flour) muffin or quick bread recipe. Sourdough starter adds a tangy flavor that might otherwise be added by buttermilk or yogurt. The starter can be ripe, but it doesn't have to be, making this a good use for a refrigerated starter you are trying to coax back to life. If you prefer a less acidic flavor, replace the baking soda in your recipe with twice the amount of baking powder when adding sourdough starter.

- Try Sourdough Oatmeal Muffins (http://bit.ly/1e13TQW).
- Sourdough starter makes everyday Banana Bread extraordinary (http://bit.ly/1It6e0p).
- This sweet Sourdough Cornbread from The Gingered Whisk looks delicious (http://bit.ly/1FPga03).
- Adding 1 cup starter makes the best steamed New England Brown Bread (http://bit.ly/1KTFR4x) ever. And it's 100-percent whole grains, too.

Pizza, Crackers and Cookies

- Add ½ to 1 cup sourdough starter to your favorite pizza crust recipe. If making a large batch, you can add more than 1 cup starter, but reduce the amount of yeast slightly.
- Homemade crackers are so much better than the packaged kind. Try my favorite Sourdough Herb Crackers (http://bit.ly/1HZMkbd).
- Even cookies get in on the sourdough act with this Peanut Butter Cookies recipe from Sourdoughs International (http://bit.ly/1T9LT6I).
- Every year over the holidays I make a big batch of Sourdough Pfefferneusse cookies to give as gifts (http://bit.ly/1HnBCzk).

Dry For Later Use

Homemade starter can be dried just like commercial starter. Lisa Rayner, author of *Wild Bread*, recommends the following process:

1. Spread a very thin layer of active starter on parchment paper. Let dry in undisturbed location for 2 to 7 days, depending on humidity.
2. Crumble dried starter and place in freezer bag. Store in freezer.
3. Mix starter with flour and water to reactivate starter, then follow your regular feeding process until bubbly.

Drying starter is a good way to keep a back-up supply of sourdough starter on hand.

6 Bake at 500 F for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 400 F, and bake for an additional 45 minutes.

San Francisco Sourdough Starter

1 package yeast
2½ cups warm water, divided
2 cups sifted flour
1 tablespoon salt
1 tablespoon sugar

1 Dissolve yeast in ½ cup warm water. Stir in remaining water, flour, salt and sugar. Beat until smooth. Let stand, uncovered, at room temperature for 3 to 5 days, stirring three times a day, and covering at night to prevent drying.

2 The starter should have a strong, yeasty smell. Store unused portion in covered container in refrigerator.

Amish Friendship Bread Starter

Yields 4 cups starter.

1 cup sugar
1 cup milk
1 cup all-purpose flour

1 In large, deep, glass or plastic container, combine sugar, milk and flour. With wooden or plastic (not metal) spoon, stir mixture.

2 Cover lightly. Replace lid slightly ajar, or place cheesecloth over container and secure with rubber band. Store at room temperature.

3 Uncover and stir daily for 17 days.

4 On Day 18, do nothing.

Sourdough Bread

5 On Days 19, 20 and 21, uncover and stir mixture.

6 On Day 22, stir and add 1 cup sugar, 1 cup milk and 1 cup all-purpose flour; stir to combine. Replace lid.

7 On Days 23, 24, 25 and 26, stir.

8 On Day 27, stir in 1 cup sugar, 1 cup milk and 1 cup flour.

9 You should have about 4 cups starter. Give 1 cup to each of two friends; use 1 cup to make Amish Friendship Bread, and use 1 cup to keep starter going. Store, covered, at room temperature.

10 To keep starter going, on Day 1, do nothing.

11 On Days 2, 3 and 4, stir.

12 On Day 5, stir in 1 cup sugar, 1 cup milk and 1 cup all-purpose flour. Pour mixture into large glass mixing bowl; cover lightly. Mixture will rise.

13 On Days 6, 7, 8 and 9, stir.

14 On Day 10, add 1 cup granulated sugar, 1 cup milk and 1 cup all-purpose flour; stir to combine.

15 Give 1 cup to each of two friends, use 1 cup to make bread, and keep 1 cup as a starter. Repeat.

HINTS AND TIPS ON USING SOURDOUGH STARTER

By Jodi L. Wise

With fall closing in, baking seems to be on everyone's mind. We get a lot of telephone calls concerning temperatures, and I have learned that controlling temperatures is a major part of sourdough starters. All of which is why we at Sourdoughs International suggest a proofing box.

In an earlier blog post, I provided instructions to make a simple proofing box (http://bit.ly/1F6Dje8).

Our sourdough cultures like 90 F for the first 24 hours to start the activation. The higher temperature promotes rapid growth of the lactobacilli and acid production. High acidity helps prevent contamination by non-sourdough organisms present in most flour.

After the first 24 hours, reduce the temperature to 70 F for the next 3 to 4 days. Of course, there are steps in there that you do to feed the starter, etc., but what we are addressing here is the temperature issue.

The reason the temperature should be at 70 F is that this temperature slows bacterial growth and acid production after the initial 24 hours. Too much acidity may help prevent contamination, but it also inhibits yeast. The majority of our calls regard concern over these higher temperatures. Well, that is like buying a gas truck and putting diesel in it. It might work for a few miles, but it won't work for long. Temperature is an important part of this process; a proofing box is a must.

Another question we are asked is, "How do I know if my culture is bad?" That's simple: the smell. Some say, "Well, my culture has a different smell." Nope. If your culture is bad, there will be no question in your mind that it is bad. The smell is horrible – run-you-out-of-the-house horrible. Most people are not used to a natural-leavened sourdough smell. Some smell yeasty, others have a distinctive smell, not all are the same.

I always suggest when trying new things, write all your steps down. It may seem silly at first, but we all have made something and wished we could remember what we did to make it. This way, if you have a notebook, you know what worked and what didn't.

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Stale, But Not Forgotten

Don't throw out your dry, brittle bread … give it new life with these fresh recipes.

Article and photographs by KAREN K. WILL

With all this bread you're baking, you're bound to have some turn stale on you, especially since chemical preservatives aren't in your ingredient list. But before you toss it to the hogs, consider all the marvelous dishes that have been built with old bread. Our parents and grandparents who lived through the Depression, as well as frugal homemakers all over the world, have come up with some ingenious and delicious uses for stale bread. They looked at stale bread and knew it had value, and you should, too. If you're thinking like a homesteader, you'll find a way to wring every last crumb from a loaf.

Keep in mind that many of these recipes are flexible, depending on the amount of stale bread you have on hand, so just use your best judgment if exact measurements aren't specified.

Double Chocolate Stout Cake

Yields 8 servings.

1½ cups Double Chocolate Stout beer (Young's)
½ cup heavy whipping cream
½ cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar, divided
1¼ cups semi-sweet chocolate chips, divided
4 large eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla
4 cups stale artisan white bread with crust, cut into 1-inch cubes

1 In medium saucepan, combine beer, cream and ½ cup sugar, and heat over medium heat until just simmering. Remove from heat, and stir in 1 cup chocolate chips, stirring until melted. Set aside and let cool slightly.

2 Heat oven to 325 F. Butter 1½-quart casserole dish and set aside.

3 In large bowl, whisk together eggs and vanilla. One ladleful at a time, add warm chocolate mixture, whisking well after each addition. Add breadcrumbs and mix to coat.

4 Pour mixture into prepared dish. Sprinkle top with remaining chocolate chips and remaining sugar.

5 Bake for 55 minutes, or until custard is set and bubbling. Let cool for 15 minutes before serving. Serve with (Slightly) Whipped Cream (recipe follows) over the top.

(Slightly) Whipped Cream

1 pint heavy whipping cream
⅛ teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon sugar

1 Place all ingredients in bowl and whisk by hand until slightly thickened (not whipped, still a little runny).

2 Serve over Double Chocolate Stout Cake.

Ribollita Soup

Ribollita translates to "reboiled" in Italian, as this soup is traditionally made a day ahead and then reheated. Stale bread plays a big role, as it is sliced and toasted, then served under the soup, making it a filling meal as well as a great way to use up stale bread. Prepare this soup the day before you want to serve it and refrigerate overnight. Yields 8 servings.

¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
1 large onion, chopped
1 carrot, peeled and chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
4 to 6 cloves garlic, finely chopped, plus 1 whole clove for rubbing
1 small head red cabbage, thinly sliced
1 large potato, chopped
4 zucchini, chopped
2 cans (15 ounces each) cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
1 can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes
1 fresh sprig or ½ teaspoon dried rosemary
1 fresh sprig or ½ teaspoon dried thyme
1 fresh sprig or ½ teaspoon dried sage
1 teaspoon dried red chile flakes
Sea salt and pepper, to taste
2 quarts water
1 pound savoy cabbage, thinly sliced
8 slices crusty Italian bread
Grated Parmesan cheese

1 In large saucepan, heat ½ cup olive oil over medium heat. Add chopped onion, carrot and celery, and cook gently for about 10 minutes.

2 Add chopped garlic and cook for a few additional minutes.

3 Stir in red cabbage, potato and zucchini, and cook 10 minutes more.

4 Add beans, tomatoes and spices, and season with salt and pepper. Pour in water, using enough for everything to be well covered, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for about 2 hours.

5 Remove a few ladlefuls of soup and mash or purée, then return to pot (this will thicken the soup a little). Add savoy cabbage and continue simmering for another 15 minutes.

6 Remove soup from heat and allow to cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

7 The next day, reheat soup over low heat, stirring in remaining olive oil until well-blended.

8 Toast bread slices under broiler. Cut remaining garlic clove in half, and rub each over toasted bread.

9 To serve, place 1 slice toasted bread in bowl and ladle soup over it. Drizzle with a little additional olive oil and top with Parmesan cheese.

Breadcrumbs

1 Cut stale bread (up to a whole loaf) into cubes and place on baking sheet overnight to dry out.

2 In morning, heat oven to 400 F, and bake cubes for 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool.

3 Run cooled bread cubes through food processor or blender until coarsely pulverized. Store crumbs in airtight jar in pantry, where they'll keep for several weeks.

NOTE: Use breadcrumbs to coat things like chicken or fish, to top au gratin dishes such as macaroni and cheese or potatoes, or to mix with other ingredients to beef up a dish like meatloaf or meatballs. Breadcrumbs can even be utilized for dessert. Try this: Mix dried breadcrumbs with a little cinnamon and sugar. Place 2 tablespoons of mixture in custard cups, and fill with your favorite custard mixture. Bake according to custard recipe.

Spice Pudding

Yields 6 servings.

1½ cups stale breadcrumbs
1 cup chopped dried cranberries
1 egg
½ cup sugar
2 cups milk
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground cloves
½ teaspoon allspice
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
⅛ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon melted butter

1 Heat oven to 300 F. Grease 8-by-8-inch baking pan; set aside.

2 Place breadcrumbs in prepared pan and scatter cranberries evenly over top.

3 In large bowl, beat egg until pale. Whisk in sugar, milk, spices, salt and butter. Pour over cranberries.

4 Place dish in pan of hot water, with water coming up about ½ inch around sides. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes, or until pudding is firm. Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly. Serve warm with Hard Sauce (recipe follows).

Hard Sauce:

½ cup butter, room temperature
1½ cups sifted confectioner's sugar
2 tablespoons rum, brandy or whiskey, or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 In bowl, cream butter and confectioner's sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in rum until fluffy.

Breakfast Bacon & Greens Strata

Stratas (essentially a stale-bread casserole) not only use up a ton of stale bread, but this dish can be made the night before, and it allows for scores of substitutions. Feel free to use whatever combination of meat, veggies and cheese you have on hand. Stratas are perfect when you have overnight guests because you can bring it together the night before, and sleep well knowing your friends will be treated to a delicious breakfast without the necessity of getting up early to fix it. Yields 8 to 10 servings.

- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 pound bacon, chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt, divided
- ½ teaspoon black pepper, divided
- 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 1 large bunch Swiss chard or spinach, chopped
- 7 cups cubed artisan white bread, about ¾ loaf, divided
- 6 ounces (2 cups) grated fontina cheese, divided
- 2 ounces (1 cup) finely grated Parmesan, divided
- 10 eggs
- 3 cups milk
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

1 In large skillet, sauté onion in butter until onion begins to soften. Add bacon, and sauté until it starts to cook. Add ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper, and cook for 1 minute. Stir in tomatoes, and cook for a few minutes more. Add greens and continue cooking until wilted and tender. Remove from heat.

2 Butter 3-quart baking dish, and scatter half the bread cubes in bottom of dish. Spoon on half the greens-bacon mixture, then top with half of both cheeses. Repeat layers.

3 In large bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, mustard, and remaining salt and pepper. Pour evenly over layers in dish; cover with foil and refrigerate overnight.

4 The next morning, let strata stand at room temperature for 30 minutes while preheating oven to 350 F.

5 Bake, uncovered, for 45 to 55 minutes, or until strata is puffed and golden brown. Let cool for 5 minutes before serving. Serve with sour cream or hot sauce.

Parmesan Breadsticks

Stale bread
Melted butter
Finely grated Parmesan cheese

1 Heat oven to 375 F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper; set aside.

2 Cut stale bread into strips about 5 inches long and about ½ inch wide. Roll in melted butter, and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Place on prepared baking sheet.

3 Bake for about 15 minutes, or until nicely browned. Serve alongside soup, or with cheese or dip for a snack.

Roasted Pepper Bruschetta

Yields 8 to 10 servings.

4 bell peppers of different colors
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon white wine vinegar
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
Sea salt and pepper, to taste
1 to 2 stale baguette loaves

1 Adjust oven rack to middle position. Heat broiler.
2 Place peppers on lightly oiled baking sheet, and roast under broiler until skins are blistered and charred, about 10 to 15 minutes, turning them frequently.
3 Remove peppers from oven, and place in paper or plastic bag; seal bag. Allow to sit for about 10 minutes so peppers will steam and skins will loosen.
4 Peel charred, papery skins from peppers. Slice open peppers and remove membranes and seeds. Dice peppers thin.
5 In large bowl, combine peppers, oil, lemon juice, vinegar, basil, salt and pepper; toss to coat. Allow to stand for 30 minutes.
6 Slice baguette into rounds, and place on baking sheet. Broil for 2 minutes; remove and let cool. Top each with about 1 tablespoon roasted pepper mixture, and season to taste with a little sea salt.
NOTE: The pepper mixture can be refrigerated up to five days if you want to prepare it ahead of time.

Croutons

1 Heat oven to 375 F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper; set aside.
2 Cut stale bread into cubes, and place in large mixing bowl. Add enough olive oil to coat bread but not drown it, and toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper, and mix thoroughly. Pour onto prepared baking sheet, and bake for 15 to 20 minutes, or until lightly browned, turning once halfway through baking time.
3 Serve croutons with salad, or eat as a snack. They're much tastier than potato chips any day!

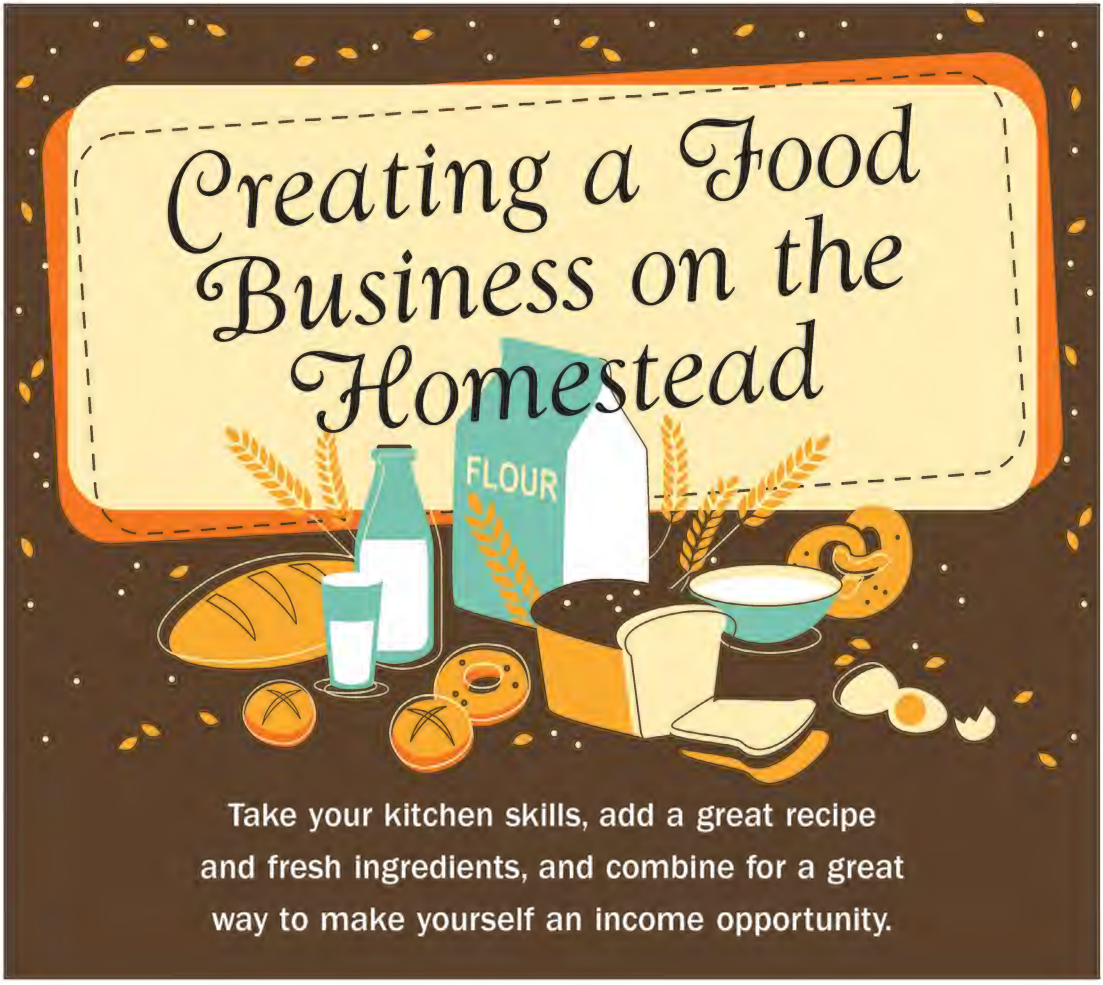
Pain Perdu

"Pain perdu" translates to "lost bread" in French, and is called such because it's a way to reclaim "lost," or stale, bread. In France, it's considered dessert, breakfast or an afternoon snack.

1 egg
Pinch of salt
2 teaspoons sugar
¼ cup milk
⅛ teaspoon vanilla
4 slices stale bread

1 Heat oven to 400 F. Butter 9-by-13-inch baking pan; set aside.
2 In medium bowl, beat egg. Add salt, sugar, milk and vanilla, and beat to combine. Pour mixture into shallow dish.
3 Dip each bread slice into egg mixture, letting it sit for a few moments to soak up batter. Arrange slices in prepared pan, and bake for 30 minutes, or until dry and browned. Serve with butter and honey or syrup.

Creating a Food Business on the Homestead



Take your kitchen skills, add a great recipe and fresh ingredients, and combine for a great way to make yourself an income opportunity.

By JOHN IVANKO and LISA KIVIRIST

Calling all jammers, bakers and canners. You could be part of a growing movement of people starting small food businesses in their homes. No capital needed, just good recipes, enthusiasm and commitment, plus enough know-how to turn ingredients into sought-after treats for your local community. Everything you require is probably already in your home kitchen – and you can start tomorrow.

Thanks to new laws on the books in 42 states, specific food businesses can now be launched from home kitchens. These state laws, often referred to as "cottage food laws," allow you to sell certain food products to your neighbors and in your community. By certain foods, the laws mean various "non-hazardous" food items, often defined as those that are high-acid, like pickles and preserves, or low-moisture, like breads or cookies.

"After the Great Recession started in 2007, states started implementing cottage food laws to help boost their local economies," says David Crabill, founder of Forrager.com, an online community where people can ask and answer questions, connect with each other, and add their cottage food operation to the directory. "Today, almost every state has some way to allow home cooks to start a food business with relative ease."

What's for sale?

States now make it possible for anyone to earn some income, follow a culinary passion or dream, and have some fun at the same time. From pies to pickles, wedding cakes to granola, preserves to decorated cookies, fledgling food entrepreneurs no longer need to sink thousands of dollars into a commercial kitchen or fork over $50 an hour to rent a licensed facility to turn Aunt Emma's biscotti recipe into a money-making dream business. We now have the freedom to earn.

ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/BLUEBARRY

Cottage food laws vary a lot by state, so follow the one for your state. That said, there are four key questions answered in your state's cottage food law:

What products can you sell?

Your state's legislation will specifically outline the "non-hazardous" food items you can produce under cottage food law, generally grouped as high-acid canned food products (preserves, pickles and salsas) or low-moisture baked goods that don't require refrigeration. Sometimes the legislation will itemize what you can or can't sell, but they may also include candy or dry mixes. Focus on what you can legally make, and don't waste time, energy and money spinning your wheels on what you can't. Of course, you can always dedicate the time and energy needed to potentially change your state's law to better meet your aspirations; many laws came about because of such active citizenship.

Where can you sell your products?

Each cottage food law will dictate where you can sell your product directly to the public. Farmers' markets and special community events are among the most common venues. Even if your state's law allows sales at a farmers' market, that doesn't mean this venue must allow you to sell there. Some farmers' markets have bylaws or rules that exclude cottage food enterprises. The states with the greatest sales venue options often include direct orders, home pickup and mail order.

How are you allowed to sell your products?

All cottage food laws permit direct sales to the public. Some of the more restrictive states, however, only allow direct-to-customer sales, meaning no indirect sales to other businesses that could resell your product. But in more than a dozen states, products can be sold through indirect or wholesale channels, to restaurants, specialty food shops or the local food cooperative. However, under no circumstances are you ever "catering." You're welcome to produce certain foods in your home kitchen and have them consumed off premises – just don't slice, plate or otherwise be involved in serving your product.

"I have so many extra tomatoes from my garden each summer. It'd be great to sell some salsa."

Homemade pickles are one of our specialties.
TOP: Liam and Lisa man the pickle stand at a recent farmers' market.

Jodie Ivanko (2)

PEPPERMINT BISCOTTI

Recipe from *Farmstead Chef* (*FarmsteadChef.com*)
by Lisa Kivirist and John Ivanko
Yields 3 dozen biscotti.

One winter we realized we had accumulated a large plastic bag filled with various candy canes and peppermint candies. We hate to throw things out – yet we realized we'd never eat the candies. So we developed this "repurposing" recipe to transform those candy canes and mints into something new and improved.

¾ cup (1½ sticks) butter, softened
¾ cup sugar
3 eggs
2 teaspoons peppermint extract
3¼ cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
1½ cups crushed peppermint candy, divided
White chocolate bark, melted, for frosting

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. In large mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in peppermint extract.
3. In separate bowl, combine flour, baking powder and salt. Stir in 1 cup crushed candy. Gradually add to creamed mixture, beating until blended (dough will be stiff).
4. Divide dough in half. On baking sheet, roll each portion into 12-by-2½-inch rectangle, about 1 inch thick, then roll dough from long side into long, thin roll, similar to jellyroll or baguette. Place seam-side down on baking sheet.
5. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until golden brown. Carefully remove to wire rack, and cool for 15 minutes.
6. On cutting board, cut at angle into ½-inch-thick slices. Place cut-side down on baking sheets. Bake for an additional 12 to 15 minutes, or until firm.
7. Drizzle melted chocolate over cookies in swirled designs and sprinkle with remaining crushed candy.

INN SERENDIPITY'S COTTAGE FOOD ENTERPRISE: YEAR 1

On our small homestead, where we also operate Inn Serendipity Bed & Breakfast, we've embraced our state's cottage food law by turning our cucumbers into pickles, cabbage into sauerkraut, rhubarb into shrub, and pumpkin into pickled pumpkin.

We've already boosted our bottom line by more than $200 in our first year out, with zero investment, no regulatory headaches or even much marketing effort. We've sold products at a holiday farmers' market and on-farm events. To boost sales further, we're working on getting our state's cottage food law changed to permit the sale of baked goods as well, plus raise our sales cap.

How much can you sell of your products?

Most states have a gross sales cap on the products you're selling. This refers to the maximum gross sales your operation can reach per year, which can range from $5,000 to $45,000. Some states, however, have no sales cap at all, but those states may require more in terms of regulatory oversight and inspection.

Once you've answered these four questions and understand how the cottage food law operates in your state, you'll then need to figure out whether what you love to make is worth selling. If people are clamoring for your artisan bread or strawberry jam, that's an excellent sign. In the end, your ability to sell products is based on creating items your customers want, need, and are willing to purchase at a fair price that they, not you, determine. That's where marketing comes in.

Selling your story

A wide range of different elements go into defining a great product, including the uniqueness of the recipe, the quality of the ingredients, the packaging, perhaps the specific small-batch production process, and even the messaging you've created to promote your product.

Marketing covers everything from developing your product, its packaging and label to sharing the story you create around it on a website. While the tendency is to focus on the product – say your family's favorite salsa recipe – when you're selling to the public, what you sell must ultimately satisfy the needs of your customers. Understanding your customers increases your likelihood of success.

As we write about in *Homemade for Sale*, there are seven Ps of Marketing (not just four such points covered in some marketing textbooks): Product, Price, Place (distribution), Promotion, People, Partnerships and Purpose. The most effective marketing efforts are those that combine all seven Ps into one cohesive, integrated and clear plan that can be effectively implemented. Making a great-tasting product is only the start.

Product

Most cottage food operators should start with their product, testing their recipes. Besides taste and flavor, you'll want consistency. Often, the product is made in small batches, with specialized or unique recipes and with real ingredients. Added to this are the growing issues more Americans have with respect to what they eat; allergies or sensitivities to peanuts, soybeans,

gluten and dairy products have exploded. Cottage food enterprises sometimes address these growing trends.

Determine what makes your product different – and better than others.

In some cases, if your ingredients are from your apple orchard, you're using a cherished ethnic recipe passed down several generations, or you have a unique product you've developed and perfected, these may be reason enough for a successful launch in your community.

Your target market is the audience or potential customers you want to reach, serve and satisfy with your products. They're often defined by demographics, like age or geography, as well as psychographics, which are attitudes, beliefs and values.

Your product will occupy a niche in the larger market, and you'll need to "position" your product – the expression of differentiation. For example, a gift-oriented jar of jam attractively packaged is quite different than the same product sold as a staple for the pantry when it comes to the price you can charge.

The cottage food law for your state will dictate exactly what must be on the label of any canned products.

In addition to a list of ingredients in order of greatest to least used and by weight, along with a processing date, most states require a sentence with your name and contact information, plus a statement like "Manufactured in a home kitchen" or "Not prepared in a state-approved commercial food facility"; the exact wording is usually specified by your state.

Exceptions exists, of course, like if you make any health claim. So keep it simple and avoid making health claims. For any product, packaging should be chosen to ensure the product's safety, quality and compelling presentation. Remember, we eat with our eyes first.

Price

Price can appeal to a customer on a limited budget, or deter an upscale clientele that might happily pay a premium for an item made with organic ingredients or one fresh from the oven. For many impulse purchases, convenience, comfort or hunger may drive the exchange; customers may pay a premium for any of these qualities.

> "I love baking, but I really have no interest in starting a full-time bakery, especially being a stay-at-home mom with young kids. But doing something part-time from my home kitchen? That's something for me."

White No-Knead Bread was on the menu for a local bread baker.
TOP: We also offer Peppermint Biscotti at the Inn (recipe on opposite page).

TOP TO BOTTOM: JOHN HANNOD; KAREN K. WELL

PROS AND CONS FOR COTTAGE FOOD OPERATORS (FROM *HOMEMADE FOR SALE*)

PROS

- Little to no capital needed; you probably have everything you need in your kitchen already.
- Fast start-up. Most states have a simple, low-cost registration process.
- May already have a recipe and be experienced in what you want to make.
- Sell directly to the customer and keep more profit.
- There's nothing like the flexibility and freedom of being your own boss – you get to call your own shots.
- You're helping build a stronger local economy and community connections.
- Defining success on your own terms.
- Opportunity to grow and expand after you prove a successful market.

CONS

- State regulations limit what products you can make, some more than others.
- States may also have limitations on where you can sell; some do not allow special orders and restrict sales to farmers' markets or public events.
- With any food product, you're liable for what you make and need to insure yourself for the risk you take.
- Baking, canning and other food preparation is hard work on your feet, especially if you have to make multiple fresh items at once.
- Bookkeeping is a must since you're required to keep track of sales, expenses and inventory. A real chore, if you don't like crunching numbers.
- May stir up some negative vibes when viewed as competition by local businesses, such as an established commercial bakery.

Setting a price for your product can involve comparing it to your competition, establishing a market value for it, or calculating a cost-input value that captures your ingredients and time. It can also be a combination of these approaches.

Place

Clearly defined by your state's cottage food law, where you can sell your product often includes farmers' markets, community events, and other venues that allow you to sell directly to customers. Only certain states permit indirect sales or wholesale distribution.

Promotion

You need not empty the bank to promote your product to let potential customers know your product exists. Depending on your skill set, comfort with a computer, time and budget, there are many free or nearly free promotional opportunities. Promotion includes both advertising and public relations (PR). Advertising is purchased, perhaps in the form of promotional posters or flyers, while PR, whether solicited or unsolicited, is free, but it will take time and effort.

Most cottage food operations quickly set up an attractive website; you can set up one for free on Wix, Weebly or Wordpress. Everything you do is about sharing your story. Don't overlook ways to let your customers do this for you as well. To build awareness around your product, you'll need to get people to try it, love it, and share what they like about it with others in your community. Social media, including Facebook and Twitter, provides free options to build relationships and reach out to potential customers.

People, Partnership and Purpose

One way or another, your food product must satisfy some need of your customers in a delicious way. Customer referrals and word-of-mouth endorsements remain the most powerful form of promotion, which is why many food entrepreneurs follow the 80-20 rule, recognizing that 80 percent of their business comes from 20 percent of their customers. Go out of your way to keep them happy and engaged; throw a private "tasting party" for them.

Partnerships can be magnified by cottage food operators, especially if you're able to connect with like-minded organizations. If you sell fresh bread, connect with a jam and jelly maker at the market – or vice versa. Collaboration can go a long way in boosting sales for both partners and taking better care of customers.

Finally, let your passion for your products sing through everything you say and do. Your sense of purpose is a part of your inspiring story and helps you put a face to the food item that your customers then savor, one bite at a time.

Organize your kitchen

You already know your way around a kitchen, but now it's time to operate an efficient production facility where you pump out your pickles and pound cake like nobody's business.

Take your kitchen setup seriously and

take the time to organize systems that ensure food safety. As much as you can, separate personal use from business use; in some states, this separation is required by law. Items that are definitely business-only – such as product ingredients – need to be stored, labeled clearly, and tracked separately. You don't have to go out and buy a bunch of new equipment, though. Under cottage food laws, you can use what you already own.

When starting out, get a handle on your equipment and ingredients. Determine how you will use your kitchen space most effectively to access these items when you're in production flow. Next, focus on efficiency, cleanliness, ease of use, and food safety when determining your layout.

Clear clutter, set aside business-only storage areas, and set family boundaries for times when you're in production. Most laws need the cook to keep children out of the kitchen when food items are being made; some laws have stringent regulations related to pets in the home.

Again, consult with the laws in your state for specific requirements.

Most important of all is food safety. You wouldn't poison your own family, so why would feeding the public be any different? State food safety requirements may be as simple as practicing basic food handling procedures, like sanitizing counters, washing hands, and keeping a thermometer in your refrigerator. In some states, there may be a specific requirement list and a mandatory on-site inspection; in these states, however, such regulation is balanced by a greater opportunity for sales.

Business and bookkeeping basics

Just as with any business, you'll need to keep track of what you sell and the expenses associated with doing so. Income minus expenses equals profit, and it's this profit that the Internal Revenue Service wants to see at least three of every five years for your business to be legit.

Some basic registrations you'll need to complete to legally operate as such a business include getting licensed by your state's Department of Agriculture or a similar agency handling cottage food enterprises, and securing a business license.

Setting up your business can be as simple as a sole proprietorship. Look at adding some liability protection as a limited liability company (LLC) or corporation, both of which are more involved and costly. Additional insurance, while not required, should seriously be considered, if what you do is not already covered under your homeowners' insurance policy – some cottage food enterprises could be covered as "incidental to the home."

Keep in mind that, in nearly all cases, cottage food laws by their very definition apply only to non-hazardous food products.

Recognize that the cottage food movement represents more than an enjoyable way to secure a new income source. You're helping to grow the local food movement in your community by providing "direct-to-the-food-artisan" connections.

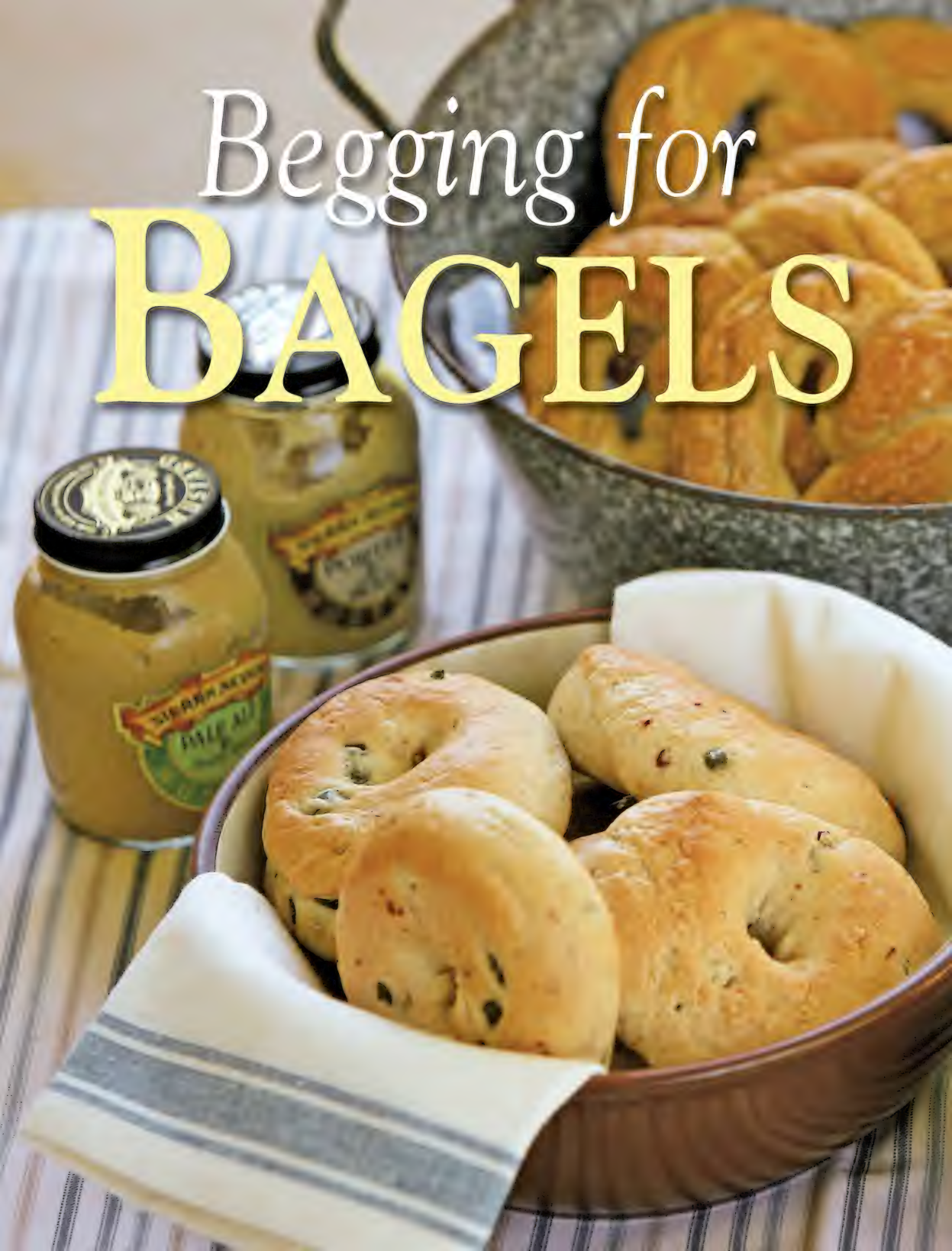
"Home cooks often start these businesses to make more money, but many ultimately find that it's the personal connections they make that matter most," Crabill says. "Cottage food businesses have the opportunity to positively impact their communities in so many different ways."

Best of all, thanks to cottage food laws, "fresh from the farm" and "homemade" on the label means exactly what's written.

Lisa Kivirist and John Ivanko are co-authors of Homemade for Sale, Farmstead Chef, Rural Renaissance *and* ECOpreneuring. *They operate a cottage food enterprise from their home kitchen as well as the award-winning Inn Serendipity Bed & Breakfast in Browntown, Wisconsin, which is completely powered by the wind and sun.*

> "There's nothing more satisfying than making and sharing my fruit jams and jellies with others. I keep giving everything away, but my friends tell me they'd be happy to buy from me. But I don't have big bucks to start a full-blown commercial operation."

To order *Homemade for Sale* by Lisa Kivirist and John D. Ivanko, visit the GRIT Bookstore, www.grit.com/store.



Begging for BAGELS

Boiled breads – like bagels, pretzels and dumplings – turn out soft and chewy.

Article and photographs by KAREN K. WILL

I read somewhere that "an unboiled bagel is just a roll with a hole," and it caused me to think about the intricacies of various foods, how they're made, and what makes them unique. Good boiled breads, such as bagels and pretzels, are soft and chewy, and they take a while to get through. Fresh from the oven, they're shiny and deliciously yeasty.

It's amazing how different something can taste when it hasn't been corrupted by preservatives, trucked 1,500 miles to a grocery store, and aged on the shelf for days. Mass-produced bagels are vastly different from homemade. Most brands sold today are extruded, meaning the dough is forced through tubes, mechanically cut, and steamed rather than boiled. This process turns out thousands of "units" per hour, but it stresses the dough. Hand-forming a bagel, followed by boiling, gives much better results.

Why boil? Let's look at bagels – boiling is responsible for this holey bread's unique qualities. Boiling serves three purposes: First, it sets the shape and kills some of the yeast on the outer surface of the dough, limiting the bagel's expansion when it's baked. Second, it gelatinizes the starches on the surface, leading to a shiny coating and a chewy texture. And finally, it activates the yeast in the inner layers of dough.

Creating boiled breads is a multi-stage process. They aren't a snap to make, especially when it comes to rolling and shaping pretzels, but they aren't microsurgery either. After bringing together the dough, there's shaping, rising, broiling (to brown the surface), boiling and baking. If you have modest kitchen acumen and a little experience handling dough, you should be able to pull off something resembling a bagel or pretzel on your first try. But don't expect to just whip these things out while chatting with company in the kitchen. Give yourself a few quiet hours to assemble your equipment and ingredients, play with your dough, and bake the finished little masterpieces.

Have fun with these recipes – add toppings (see "Just Top It" on Page 71), or create uniquely flavored bagels by following the plain recipe and adding your favorite herbs, veggies, dried fruit or spices. Freeze excess bagels and pretzels, and when you're ready to eat them, defrost in the microwave and pop into the toaster oven for a few minutes.

Plain Bagels

4½ cups bread flour, divided
4 teaspoons active dry yeast
1½ cups warm water
1 tablespoon sugar
1½ teaspoons salt
1 egg, optional

Water bath:
1 gallon water
1 tablespoon sugar

1 In large bowl, mix together 2 cups flour and yeast.
2 In separate bowl, combine warm water, 1 tablespoon sugar and salt; combine with flour mixture.
3 Beat at low speed for about 30 seconds, scraping sides of bowl; beat an additional 3 minutes on high speed. Incorporate as much of remaining flour as possible.
4 Turn out dough onto lightly floured board. Knead in additional flour to make moderately stiff dough. Knead until smooth and elastic. Cover with plastic wrap and allow to rest for 15 minutes.
5 Divide dough into 8 equal portions, and roll into balls. Punch hole in middle with floured finger and gently pull to enlarge hole to 2 inches.
6 Place bagels on greased baking sheet; cover with tea towel and allow to rise for 20 minutes.
7 Meanwhile, heat oven to broil. Prepare water bath and put it on to boil.
8 After bagels have risen for 20 minutes, broil for 1½ minutes on each side.
9 Once water bath is boiling, reduce heat. Place bagels, 3 at a time, in water for 1½ minutes, turning after 45 seconds.
10 Drain bagels and place on greased baking sheet.
11 If desired, brush with egg wash (beat egg with 1 tablespoon water).
12 Bake at 400 F for 20 to 25 minutes.

Let's Make Bagels

By Annie Kelley

I love bagels! They are one of the most versatile and satisfying breads you can make or buy. Because so many bagel shops are specialty stores, I automatically thought making bagels must be complicated, or take special devices, utensils or machines. Nope ... turns out they are amazingly easy to make.

You can make bagel dough using a stand mixer with a dough hook or a bread machine. I use my trusty KitchenAid. You can also use different kinds of flour.

Bagels

1 tablespoon instant yeast
4 cups flour (I use 3 cups unbleached and 1 cup white whole wheat)
2 teaspoons salt
1 tablespoon barley malt syrup
12 ounces warm water

1 Combine all ingredients in mixer bowl. Turn machine to medium-low, and mix well for about 10 minutes. (This is a stiff dough, it will try to gallop your mixer across the counter, so keep an eye and a hand on it. I make sure the mixer has incorporated all flour into the dough and then let it run for almost 10 minutes, kneading the bread thoroughly. You want to develop the gluten.)

2 Stop mixer and put dough into lightly oiled bowl. Cover with towel, and let sit for about 1½ hours. The dough will puff up, but won't necessarily double in size. (To use your bread machine, follow the same instructions, except place it in the machine on the dough cycle. Complete the cycle after you check it once to make sure it's incorporated all the flour.)

3 Prepare work surface (I use a pastry board or a piece of waxed paper on my counter to keep the cleanup to a minimum), and then transfer dough to lightly floured or oiled surface. Cut dough into 8 or 12 equal pieces (depending on how big you want your bagels).

4 Roll each dough piece into ball, and cover with plastic wrap. Allow to sit for about 30 minutes; the dough will puff a little more.

5 It's time to get the kettle boiling. For this important step, you'll need a large Dutch oven or soup pot. Fill pot with hot water, and put on stove to boil.

6 When hot, add 1 tablespoon barley malt syrup, stirring well until dissolved. Keep mixture at simmer.

7 Preheat oven to 425 F.

8 Take dough balls, 1 at a time, and poke hole in center. Wiggle your fingers and twirl dough to stretch hole until about 2 inches across. (See photograph at left.) Place each bagel on baking sheet that has been lightly oiled or lined with parchment.

9 Turn up heat on water, and bring to boil. Transfer bagels to boiling water; depending on size, do 4 or 6 at a time. When water is boiling again after addition of bagels, set timer. Cook for 2 minutes on first side. Use large slotted spoon, turn each bagel over, and boil for 1 more minute.

10 Use slotted spoon to remove bagels, 1 at a time; place back on baking sheet.

11 Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until golden brown. (I like mine a little on the softer side.)

12 About 15 minutes into baking time, turn over bagels to keep them round.

13 Cool on racks.

VARIATIONS: To fancy up your bagels, make an egg wash using 1 egg white mixed with 1 tablespoon water, and brush top of bagels with mixture.

Before baking, sprinkle bagels with sesame seeds or poppy seeds (or any other type of seed you like).

For onion bagels, bake bagels for about 20 minutes, pull out of oven, brush with egg wash, and then sprinkle with dried onion. Bake for about 2 minutes, watching carefully as dried onion burns easily.

Like cinnamon-raisin bagels? Add ½ cup raisins during last few minutes of kneading. Before transferring dough to work surface, sprinkle heavily with cinnamon and sugar. Knead dough, and as you do, it will pick up cinnamon mixture. After making dough into balls, roll in more cinnamon-sugar, if desired.

The possibilities are endless, both in the type of bagels you can make and the different things you can top them with. One of my favorites is a lunch bagel topped with peanut butter and jalapeño jelly. My husband likes butter and cream cheese on his. And we both like cream cheese and sweet red pepper jelly. Use your imagination ... and enjoy those homemade bagels!

TOP TO BOTTOM: FOTOLIA (2)/MSPHOTOGRAPHIC, DONNA GEORGIEV

Herbed Cornmeal Dumplings

1 cup fine-ground cornmeal
1 cup all-purpose flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons fresh chopped herbs, such as tarragon, parsley, thyme, sage, dill or basil
¾ cup whole milk

1 In bowl, sift together cornmeal, flour, baking powder and salt. Stir in herbs.
2 Add milk, and mix to form soft dough, adding more milk if necessary. Let stand for 5 minutes.
3 Drop by tablespoons into simmering stew, and cook for 20 minutes.

JUST TOP IT

For a little variety, top your boiled breads – after boiling and before baking – with any of the following:

- Poppy seeds
- Sesame seeds
- Caraway seeds
- Dried onion flakes
- Dried garlic flakes
- Red pepper flakes
- Parmesan cheese
- Cinnamon-sugar mixture
- Sunflower seeds
- Dried savory herbs
- Pumpkin seeds

Pumpkin Spice Bagels

4 cups bread flour, divided
4 teaspoons active dry yeast
1 cup warm water
1½ teaspoons salt
½ cup brown sugar
¾ cup canned pumpkin
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1½ teaspoons nutmeg
1 teaspoon ground cloves
1 teaspoon allspice

WATER BATH:
1 gallon water
1 tablespoon sugar

EGG WASH:
1 egg
1 tablespoon water

1 In large bowl, combine 2 cups flour and yeast.
2 In separate bowl, combine warm water, salt, brown sugar, pumpkin, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and allspice. Add to flour mixture, and beat at low speed for about 30 seconds, scraping sides of bowl. Increase speed to high, and beat for 3 more minutes. Incorporate as much of remaining flour as possible.
3 Turn out dough onto lightly floured work surface. Knead in additional flour to make moderately stiff dough. Knead until smooth and elastic. Cover with plastic wrap and allow to rest for 15 minutes.
4 Divide dough into 8 equal portions, and roll into balls. Punch hole in middle with floured finger, and gently pull to enlarge hole to 2 inches. Place on greased baking sheet; cover with tea towel and allow to rise for 20 minutes.
5 Meanwhile, heat oven to broil. Prepare water bath and put on to boil.
6 After bagels have risen for 20 minutes, broil for 1½ minutes on each side.
7 Once water bath is boiling, reduce heat. Place bagels, 3 at a time, in water for 1½ minutes, turning after 45 seconds. Remove and drain, and place on greased baking sheet.
8 Make egg wash by beating egg with water. Brush over bagels, and bake at 400 F for 25 minutes.

Soft Pretzels

1½ cups warm water
2½ teaspoons active dry yeast
1 tablespoon sugar
3½ cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon salt
Coarse or kosher salt

WATER BATH:
1 gallon water
1 tablespoon baking soda

EGG WASH:
1 egg
1 tablespoon water

1 In large bowl, mix together warm water, yeast and sugar; let sit for about 5 minutes, or until foamy.

2 In separate bowl, combine flour and salt. Add to yeast mixture, and mix until it comes together. Use your hands to combine into ball. On lightly floured work surface, knead dough for a few minutes, until a smooth, sticky dough forms.

3 Place dough in large oiled bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and let sit for 45 minutes.

4 On lightly floured work surface, divide dough into 8 equal pieces. Roll each piece into long rope, 18 to 20 inches long. (Don't over-flour hands or work surface as this will make the pieces more difficult to roll.) Twist each piece into pretzel shape by placing arc of pretzel at bottom (closest to you). Round the two ends so they're facing arc, and twist them around; "paste" them to opposite sides of arc, using a little water, if necessary. Place on baking sheet covered with parchment paper.

5 Prepare water bath. Once boiling, use slotted spoon to transfer each pretzel into water; let boil for 3 minutes, flipping once halfway through. Drain on cooling rack, then transfer parboiled pretzels back to parchment-lined baking sheet.

6 Preheat oven to 400 F. Make egg wash by beating egg with water. Brush generously over each pretzel, and sprinkle with coarse or kosher salt.

7 Bake for 25 minutes.

Cornmeal to **Cornbread**

A chunk of this savory yet sweet concoction makes a meal all by itself.

by JEAN TELLER

A pot of ham and beans simmers on the back burner of your stove. Salad fixin's are in the fridge just waiting for dinnertime. You stand back and think, "Wait, something's missing."

That missing guest at your dinner feast is cornbread.

Many people take a hunk of cornbread, break it into crumbly goodness on a plate, and ladle the hot ham and beans over the top. I like the cornbread on the side, slathered with melting butter. Right this moment, the memory of that sweet taste has my taste buds on high alert.

Whatever bowl of stew or soup you have planned for tonight's main attraction, a slab of cornbread, hot from the oven, is just the side dish your family will rave about tomorrow. And leftovers are a snap. Cold cornbread for breakfast, anyone?

Our archives yielded several tasty twists on the traditional cornbread; try your own variations for the best taste, and your family's appreciation.

Spicy Vegetable Cornbread

Yields 12 muffins.

2 cups yellow cornmeal
1 cup flour
1½ tablespoons baking powder
1½ teaspoons salt
2 tablespoons dark brown sugar
3 large eggs
1⅓ cups milk
½ cup unsalted butter, melted
1 cup canned sweet corn kernels, drained, or frozen, thawed and drained
1 cup shredded Colby cheese
½ cup finely chopped carrots
½ cup grated onion
¼ cup finely chopped, seeded fresh jalapeño peppers, optional

1 Heat oven to 400 F. Grease 10-inch cast-iron skillet; set aside.

2 In large bowl, mix cornmeal, flour, baking powder, salt and brown sugar.

3 In medium bowl, whisk eggs, milk and butter; stir into dry ingredients.

4 Add corn, cheese, carrots, onion and peppers; stir until thoroughly combined.

5 Pour batter into skillet and bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until center tests done. Cut into pieces and serve from skillet. Yields 8 large servings.

6 **NOTE:** This can be prepared in a muffin tin, if preferred. Bake at same temperature until muffins test done.

Savory Cornbread

8 ounces flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
5 ounces polenta (cornmeal)
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons summer savory
8 ounces milk
3 ounces butter, melted
2 eggs
2 ounces sugar

1 Heat oven to 425 F. In large bowl, sift together flour and baking powder; add polenta, salt and savory.

2 Combine milk and butter; stir into flour mixture.

3 Beat together eggs and sugar; add to flour mixture. Stir well, but don't beat too much.

4 Pour mixture into buttered 8-inch square pan.

5 Bake about 30 minutes, until bread is well-risen and golden brown. Allow to cool in pan for at least 5 minutes, then turn out onto wire rack to finish cooling. Yields approximately 6 servings. Freezes well.

6 **NOTE:** This bread is slightly sweet, but mainly savory. Its texture is not so much bread-like as cake-like. The polenta gives it a rather coarse texture and wonderful golden yellow color. The savory flavor comes through well, whether served warm or cold.

7 For a real treat, top it with a sliver of mature cheddar cheese. Serve with a hearty soup for lunch, or as a starter course with a salad and a glass of light red wine.

Cornmeal Sticks

Yields 4½ dozen.

2 cups cold water
1½ cups yellow cornmeal
¾ teaspoon salt
1½ cups finely shredded sharp cheddar cheese
Shortening

1 Combine water, cornmeal and salt in heavy saucepan; mix until smooth. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture is very stiff, thick and pulls away from sides of pan, about 6 to 9 minutes.

2 Remove from heat; add cheese and stir until melted.

3 Pat mixture evenly into ungreased 13-by-9-by-2-inch utility dish; let stand, uncovered, at room temperature for 30 minutes. Cut into 3 lengthwise sections and 18 crosswise strips.

4 Heat shortening to 365 F in deep saucepan or deep fryer. Fry 3 cornmeal sticks together, adding one at a time, for 3 minutes, or until golden brown. If dough runs together, cut apart after frying and draining.

5 Remove with slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Serve warm.

Mexican Cornbread

Recipe from Alda Geist, Frederick, Oklahoma

2 cups yellow cornmeal
1½ teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
4 eggs
2 cups sweet milk
1 stick margarine, softened
2 cups Mexican-style whole kernel corn, drained
2 medium onions, chopped
2 cups grated American cheese

1 Sift together cornmeal, salt and baking soda.

2 Beat eggs; add milk and combine with sifted ingredients. Add margarine, corn and onions.

3 Pour half the batter into greased 9-by-13-inch pan. Top batter with grated cheese and carefully cover with remaining batter.

4 Bake at 350 to 400 F for 45 minutes.

Skillet Cornbread With Cheddar, Corn and Chiles

Recipe by Susan Belsinger, Brookeville, Maryland

This savory cornbread is rich, cake-like and full of flavor. Taste your sage to see how strong it is; if you use a strong-flavored one like Berggarten, use only about 3 tablespoons. Oregano and marjoram are also very tasty used in place of the sage. This is a great accompaniment to baked beans and coleslaw. Yields 8 servings.

1 cup unbleached white flour
1 cup cornmeal, preferably stone-ground
¼ cup whole-wheat flour
2½ teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 cup whole or 2 percent milk
3 extra-large eggs
¼ cup cold-pressed vegetable or corn oil
2 tablespoons honey or sorghum
4 tablespoons finely shredded fresh sage or 1½ tablespoons crumbled dried sage
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ cup finely sliced green onions or chopped onion
2 or 3 serrano or jalapeño peppers, stemmed, seeded and minced fine
1 cup fresh or frozen corn kernels
1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese

1 Heat oven to 375 F. Rub 10-inch iron skillet with oil.

2 In large bowl, combine white flour, cornmeal, whole-wheat flour, baking powder, salt and chili powder; blend well.

3 In another bowl, combine milk, eggs, oil and honey, and whisk for 1 minute. Stir in sage, garlic, onions, peppers and corn.

4 Add liquid ingredients to dry ingredients along with cheese and stir until just mixed. Pour batter into prepared skillet and bake for 35 to 40 minutes, or until cake tester inserted in center comes out clean. Let cornbread cool in skillet for 5 to 10 minutes before cutting and serving.

Steamed Cornbread

Yields 6 large servings.

½ cup sifted flour
½ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup yellow cornmeal
¾ cup milk
½ cup molasses
1 egg, beaten
2 tablespoons melted butter or margarine

1 Sift together sifted flour, baking soda and salt. Add remaining ingredients; mix well.

2 Pour into greased, 1-pound coffee can.

3 Cover tightly with aluminum foil and steam 3 hours on rack in covered kettle, with just enough water to simmer below can.

4 Before serving, remove bottom of can and use spatula to remove bread from can.

Cush

2 tablespoons meat drippings
2 tablespoons margarine
3 cups broken-up cornbread (use leftover cornbread or prepare specifically for this recipe)
2 cups broken-up biscuits
2 eggs, beaten
1 teaspoon ground sage
1 medium onion, chopped
Salt and pepper
Milk
Cinnamon, optional
Allspice, optional

1 Heat oven to 350 F. Grease a loaf pan; set aside.

2 In skillet, heat drippings and margarine. Add cornbread, biscuits, eggs, sage, onion, salt and pepper. Stir and brown lightly. Add milk to make a soft mush batter; cook until fairly dry. Add spices.

3 Pour into prepared pan and bake 15 to 20 minutes. Can be served hot or cold.

4 **NOTE:** If this is baked in a loaf pan, the loaf can be sliced and served with jam, margarine or jelly, as for pancakes.

Fruit Cornbread

1 cup flour
¼ teaspoon salt
3 teaspoons baking powder
2 tablespoons sugar
1¼ cups yellow cornmeal
1 egg, beaten
1⅓ cups bottled or diluted evaporated milk
¼ cup melted shortening
1 cup dried peaches, apricots or apples, cut into small pieces and cooked

1 Sift together flour, salt and baking powder; add sugar and cornmeal. Moisten with egg, milk and shortening, mixing thoroughly.

2 Stir in fruit and turn into hot, well-greased, shallow baking dish.

3 Bake at 350 F for 45 minutes. Serve as bread, or as dessert with additional stewed, juicy fruit.

LEFT TO RIGHT: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/JAN IHNATE; SUSAN BELSINGER; PAGE 73: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/NAUREEN ESSACK

Cheesy Red Pepper Cornbread

2¼ cups cornmeal
2¼ cups flour
2½ teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs, beaten
2½ cups buttermilk
¼ cup (½ stick) butter, melted
1 cup shredded provolone cheese
1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1 cup chopped roasted red peppers

1 Heat oven to 350 F.

2 In large bowl, sift together cornmeal, flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; set aside.

3 In medium bowl, whisk together eggs, buttermilk and butter; stir in cheeses and peppers. Add to dry ingredients, stirring just until combined.

4 Spoon into 2 buttered 8-by-5-inch loaf pans and bake for 1 hour, or until centers test done.

5 Remove from oven and let cool for 5 minutes. Turn onto wire rack and cool completely.

6 When wrapped airtight, bread loaves may be frozen for up to 1 month.

Fry Cornbread

1 cup white cornmeal
½ cup self-rising flour
1 teaspoon salt
Water, boiling
Oil, for frying

1 In bowl, sift together cornmeal, flour and salt. Stir in enough boiling water to make mixture consistency of dough.

2 While dough is still hot, scoop out lump the size of a golf ball. Roll and flatten in wet palm to the shape of a biscuit. Repeat procedure for remaining dough.

3 In well-oiled skillet over medium heat, fry cornbread to a golden brown on both sides, adding oil as needed. Drain cornbread on paper towels.

Traditional Virginia Spoon Bread

1 pint water
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup stone-ground white cornmeal
2 tablespoons butter
4 eggs, beaten
1 cup cold milk

1 Heat oven to 400 F.

2 Boil water in saucepan; add salt. Add cornmeal and stir 1 minute. Remove from heat and add butter.

3 Beat mixture well, then add eggs. Beat in cold milk.

4 Beat again and pour into hot, buttered baking dish. Bake 25 minutes. Serve from baking dish.

Cranberry Cornsticks With Chives

Recipe by Kris Wetherbee, Oakland, Ore.

These herb-enhanced cornsticks are a tasty change from the white buns or rolls typically served at holiday meals. Yields 14 cornsticks.

¾ cup cornmeal
¾ cup whole-wheat pastry flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon dried orange peel
½ cup dried cranberries
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
1 egg, lightly beaten
2 tablespoons canola or corn oil
1 cup buttermilk

1 Heat oven to 450 F. Place 2 well-

Skillet Sage and Peppered Cornbread

6 slices bacon
1¼ cups cornmeal
¾ cup flour
½ teaspoon salt
3 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon red chili pepper, dried, crushed
¼ teaspoon white pepper, ground
1 teaspoon paprika
1¼ cups buttermilk
1 egg
2 tablespoons molasses or honey
3 tablespoons sage, freshly chopped
2 tablespoons green onions, chopped
2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, freshly grated

1 Heat oven to 425 F. In 9- or 10-inch cast-iron skillet, fry bacon until crisp; reserve fat. Crumble bacon; set aside.

2 In medium bowl, mix cornmeal, flour, salt, baking powder, chili pepper, white pepper and paprika; blend with fork.

3 In small bowl, mix buttermilk, egg and molasses, then mix with dry ingredients. Add chopped sage (make them generous tablespoons), green onions, Parmesan cheese and crumbled bacon.

4 In skillet, heat ¼ cup reserved bacon fat to near smoking, then pour into cornmeal mixture. Immediately return batter to hot, greased skillet and bake in oven 20 to 25 minutes, or until golden brown on top. Do not overcook.

5 **NOTE:** Vegetarians can substitute ¼ cup oil for bacon fat.

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greased cast-iron cornstick pans in oven for 5 minutes or until hot.

2 Combine first eight ingredients in medium bowl; make well in center.

3 Combine egg, oil and buttermilk in small bowl; add to cornmeal mixture, stirring just until blended.

4 Reduce oven temperature to 400 F. Spoon batter into hot cornstick pans, filling ¾ full. Bake 15 to 18 minutes, or until golden; remove from pans.

Quick Cornbread

Yields 9 servings.

1 cup cornmeal
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons sugar
2 eggs
1 cup sour cream, or 1 cup buttermilk with 2 tablespoons butter
¼ cup boiling water

1 Sift together dry ingredients and set aside. Beat eggs and add sour cream.

2 Add egg and cream mixture to dry ingredients; add boiling water and stir until just moistened.

3 Pour batter into 8-by-8-by-2-inch greased baking pan. Bake at 375 F for 25 minutes, or until bread top is golden brown and springs back to the touch.

Buttermilk Bacon Cornbread

Yields 8 to 10 servings.

1 cup sifted flour
2 teaspoons sugar, optional
1½ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
¾ teaspoon salt
1 cup cornmeal
½ cup diced bacon, fried and drained
2 eggs, beaten
1 cup buttermilk
½ cup melted fat or salad oil

1 Blend together flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt; stir in cornmeal and bacon, mixing well.

2 Combine eggs, buttermilk and fat; add to flour mixture and blend – do not beat – until flour is evenly dampened.

3 Pour batter into 7-by-11-inch pan and bake at 400 F for 25 minutes, or until brown. Cut or break into pieces and serve warm.

Gram's Cornbread

5 cups cornmeal
2 cups flour
¾ teaspoon salt
4 teaspoons baking soda
2 cups brown sugar
1 cup shortening
5 eggs, beaten
3 cups sour milk or buttermilk

1 Blend together cornmeal, flour, salt and baking soda.

2 Cream together brown sugar and shortening; add eggs.

3 Alternately add dry ingredients and sour milk to creamed mixture.

4 Pour batter into three loaf pans and bake at 350 F for 45 to 60 minutes, or until bread is solid.

Polenta

In some cultures, this dish is just called "grits." The names and textures might differ slightly, but it's all soul food. Yields 6 servings.

2¾ cups water
¾ cup yellow cornmeal
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon mozzarella cheese, shredded
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

1 Combine water, cornmeal and salt in 2-quart microwave-safe dish. Microwave, covered, on high 10 to 12 minutes, stirring once. Stir in mozzarella; let stand, covered, 2 minutes.

2 Spread mixture into lightly oiled 9-inch round pan. Cool slightly.

3 Cover, then refrigerate until firm, at least 1 hour or overnight. Cut into 6 wedges.

4 Grill 12 to 15 minutes, turning once. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese over warm wedges.

Cornbread

1 cup all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon salt
¾ cup cornmeal
1 cup buttermilk
2 eggs
3 tablespoons melted butter

1 Heat oven to 375 F.

2 Sift together flour, baking soda, baking powder, sugar, salt and cornmeal. Combine buttermilk, eggs and butter; beat into dry mixture.

3 Pour batter into baking pan or skillet and bake until brown.

top to bottom: iStockphoto.com (2); iLibisca, Jason Lugo

Biscuits & More

Treat your taste buds to a culinary delight with homemade biscuits, tortillas, dumplings and noodles.

By TRACI SMITH

Whether you're dreaming of a delicious breakfast, lunch or supper, or even an afternoon snack, we have just the thing. Easy to prepare, and oh-so-good fresh from the oven, biscuits go great with butter and/or jelly or honey, or even topped with country gravy. When your stomach starts rumbling midday, satisfy your hunger with a flour tortilla topped with ham and cheese, or head south of the border with Mexican toppings. For supper, mix up a batch of dumplings or noodles to go along with soup or broth; your family will love it.

GRIT put together an exciting cookbook that features an old-fashioned key ingredient: lard. All of the recipes in this article are from *Lard: The Lost Art of Cooking With Your Grandmother's Secret Ingredient.*

In addition to the basics – lard, flour, and some sort of leavening agent – biscuits can be prepared with a variety of ingredients, such as herbs, cheeses, yogurt, buttermilk or sour milk. No matter what ingredients your recipe calls for, using lard as the shortening will ensure a rich, flaky biscuit.

If you've never had homemade tortillas, you don't know what you're missing. Made with five simple ingredients, tortillas are versatile. Use them for wraps, burritos, soft tacos or tostadas. The options are endless.

Do you remember the dumplings and noodles from your childhood? Now you can treat your family to homemade recipes like those Mom and Grandma made. Dumplings made with a biscuit mix and noodles purchased in the freezer section of your local grocery store just can't compare to homemade.

We hope you enjoy all of these wonderful recipes we've collected over the years from our loyal readers.

Cheese Roll Biscuits

These delicious little rolls are so much more than biscuits. Bread flour gives them a chewy texture and crisp crust, and the addition of cheese and buttermilk introduces extra protein and makes for a satisfying side dish or snack. Make them with Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese for a brunch or potluck. Yields 2 dozen.

¼ cup lard, cold and coarsely chopped, plus more for greasing pan
2½ cups bread flour
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup buttermilk
1 cup grated cheese of your choice

1 Preheat oven to 375 F. Grease baking sheet with lard; set aside.

2 In large bowl, sift together flour, salt, baking soda and baking powder. Using pastry blender, cut in lard until texture resembles coarse crumbs. Add buttermilk, and mix lightly with fork.

3 Turn dough out onto lightly floured surface. Knead lightly and roll out to ¼-inch thickness using floured rolling pin.

4 Sprinkle cheese evenly over dough, and then roll up as you would jellyroll.

5 Cut into ¾-inch-thick slices. Place, cut-side down, 1 inch apart on prepared baking sheet.

6 Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until puffed and golden.

Sky-High Biscuits

These jumbo-sized biscuits are aptly named because the combination of working yeast, baking powder, baking soda, cream of tartar and yogurt engages in a bubbling chemical reaction that fills the dough with carbon dioxide, causing them to rise "sky high." Make them when you have guests to impress or lots of mouths to feed. Yields 1 dozen.

½ cup lard, cold and coarsely chopped, plus more for greasing pan
2¼ teaspoons active dry yeast
¼ cup warm water (105 to 115 F)
2½ cups all-purpose unbleached flour
2 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
¾ teaspoon cream of tartar
1½ teaspoons baking soda
1 cup plain yogurt

1 Preheat oven to 425 F. Grease baking sheet with lard, and set aside.

2 In small bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water. Let stand until foamy, 5 to 10 minutes.

3 In large bowl, mix together flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, cream of tartar and baking soda. Using pastry blender or two knives, cut in lard until coarse crumbs form.

4 Make well in center of flour mixture; add yogurt and dissolved yeast all at once. Toss with fork until dry ingredients are moistened. Do not overmix.

Grandma's Homemade Biscuits

These biscuits are as authentic as they come, from a time when lard from the family's hog and milk from the backyard cow were common fare. The dough can be rolled and cut with a biscuit cutter or dropped from a wooden spoon. Make these for a big family supper, because they are best when eaten fresh from the oven. Yields 1 dozen.

⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon lard, cold and coarsely chopped, plus more for greasing pan
2½ cups all-purpose unbleached flour, divided
3 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup milk
1 tablespoon salted butter, melted

1 Preheat oven to 400 F. Grease baking sheet with lard; set aside.

2 In large mixing bowl, whisk together 2 cups flour, baking powder and salt. Using pastry blender, cut in lard until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add milk, and stir to form ball.

3 Sprinkle remaining flour on sheet of wax paper, and turn dough mixture onto it. Knead for about 5 minutes, and then roll out dough to 1-inch thickness. Cut with biscuit cutter and place 1 inch apart on prepared baking sheet, or drop dough using large spoon, onto baking sheet, and pat down. Brush tops with melted butter.

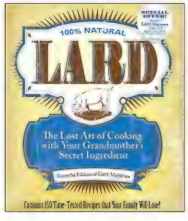
4 Bake for about 20 minutes, or until tops are golden brown.

5 On floured surface, roll dough out to ¾-inch thickness using floured rolling pin. Cut biscuits using floured 2½-inch-round biscuit cutter. Gather trimmings and repeat.

6 Place biscuits 1 inch apart on prepared baking sheet. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, or until puffed and golden. Cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes on wire rack. Serve warm.

Freezer Biscuits

The concept of freezer biscuits is a solid one – make them one day, eat them all month; that's how long they'll keep. Just pop a few into a hot oven, and you'll have crisp and flaky homemade biscuits in no time. Better yet, there are no leftovers. Yields 1 dozen.



To order *Lard: The Lost Art of Cooking with Your Grandmother's Secret Ingredient* by the Editors of Grit, visit the Grit Bookstore at www.grit.com/store.

2 cups all-purpose unbleached flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon cream of tartar
¼ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons sugar
½ cup lard, cold and coarsely chopped
⅔ cup milk
1 egg, beaten

1 In large bowl, mix together flour,

Formula/Andrinac (2)

baking powder, cream of tartar, salt and sugar. Using pastry blender or two knives, cut in lard until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

2 In small bowl, beat together milk and egg; add to flour mixture, and stir until ball forms. Turn out onto lightly floured surface; knead for a few minutes.

3 Line baking sheet with wax paper and set aside.

4 Using rolling pin, roll out dough to ¾-inch thickness and cut with biscuit cutter. Place biscuits on prepared baking sheet, and cover with plastic wrap.

5 Freeze biscuits until solid – about 6 hours – then transfer to zipper-seal plastic bag. Freeze for up to 1 month.

6 To use: Preheat oven to 425 F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Place frozen biscuits 1 inch apart on lined baking sheet. (Do not thaw before baking biscuits.) Bake for about 20 minutes, or until biscuits are puffed and golden brown. Serve warm with butter and honey.

Indian Fry Bread

Fry bread is the Native American counterpart to Mexican tortillas. Thicker and more substantial than tortillas, fry bread is delicious and filling. Made with lard and dry milk, it is truly authentic, as American Indians did not commonly have access to fresh milk. To substitute fresh milk, use 2 to 2½ cups warmed milk and omit the water. Serve with seasoned meat, cheese, onions, lettuce, salsa and beans for a fun twist on "taco night." Yields 12 pieces.

4 cups all-purpose unbleached flour
1 heaping teaspoon baking powder
¾ cup instant dry milk
1 teaspoon salt
2 to 2½ cups warm water
Lard, for frying

1 In large bowl, mix together flour, baking powder, dry milk and salt. Mix in just enough warm water to form soft dough. Cover and set aside for 2 to 3 hours.
2 Turn dough out onto floured board, and knead for 1 minute. Shape dough into log, and then cut into 12 even pieces.
3 Using floured rolling pin, roll each piece out into 5-inch round.
4 Heat lard to ½ inch deep at 360 F in cast-iron skillet. Fry dough pieces, 1 at a time, for 1 to 2 minutes on each side, or until lightly browned. Drain and cool on paper towels.

Homemade Flour Tortillas

If you've never looked at the ingredients list on a package of store-bought tortillas, you should. Forgo the additives and make your own – authentically made with lard – from pure ingredients. Serve warm with butter and honey for a snack, or with fixings for burritos or wraps for a meal. Yields 12 tortillas.

3 cups all-purpose unbleached flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
4 to 6 tablespoons lard, cold and coarsely chopped
1¼ cups warm water

1 In large bowl, combine flour, baking powder and salt. Using pastry blender, cut in lard until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add warm water, a little at a time, adding just enough to form dough that is soft and no longer sticky (do not use hot water).
2 Turn dough out onto floured board, and knead until soft and pliable, 2 to 3 minutes. Divide dough evenly into 12 portions the size of golf balls. Cover with cloth and let dough rest for at least 10 minutes.
3 Dust each ball with flour, and roll out with rolling pin or "palote," as thinly as possible without tearing, 1/16 inch or thinner.
4 Heat griddle, comal, or cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. (Do not use a very hot griddle or the tortillas will cook too quickly.)
5 One at a time, lay tortilla on hot griddle. Let brown for a few seconds on one side, then turn over. Each side should be nicely speckled.
6 Place cooked tortillas on towel or in tortilla warmer and cover while you cook the remaining tortillas. Serve warm.

CLOCKWISE FROM LOWER LEFT: FOTOLIA (4)/OLGA NAKONECHNAYA, PREUSER, MSHELDRAKE, MARCO MAYER

Dumplings

This very old-fashioned rendition of chicken and dumplings is probably the way your grandma used to make it. Nothing extra has been added – no vegetables, no noodles – this really is just chicken and dumplings. A free-range organic bird is all you need to celebrate the true flavor of chicken. Add a teaspoon or two of your favorite dried herbs and a bay leaf to spice up the broth. Or add vegetables of your choice. Yields 6 servings.

- 1 broiler chicken, dressed and cut into 8 pieces (3 to 5 pounds)
- Water
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons salt, divided
- 2 cups all-purpose unbleached flour
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 tablespoons lard, cold and coarsely chopped
- 1 cup milk

1 Place chicken pieces in large saucepan, and add enough water to cover. Add pepper and 1 teaspoon salt. Cover and simmer until chicken is tender and cooked through, about 1 hour.
2 Meanwhile, combine flour, baking powder and remaining salt in large bowl. Using pastry blender or fork, cut in lard until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add milk, ¼ cup at a time, and mix until soft dough forms; set aside.
3 Once chicken is fully cooked and no longer pink at the bone, transfer to cutting board, and cool slightly. Remove skin, shred chicken, and discard bones.
4 Return meat to pot. Bring stew to boiling, and then drop dough by teaspoonfuls into pot. Cover, and boil broth and dumplings for 12 minutes, or until dumplings have doubled in size. Serve immediately.

Homemade Noodles

You'll be delighted at how easy it is to make homemade noodles. Whenever you have leftover chicken or turkey from a meal, toss it in some broth with these noodles, and you'll have a simple, nourishing supper – perfect for a cold winter evening. Yields 6 servings.

- 3 eggs
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 1 tablespoon lard, melted and cooled
- 2 to 2¼ cups all-purpose unbleached flour, divided
- 1 scant teaspoon baking powder

Soup:

- 2 quarts (8 cups) chicken or turkey broth
- 5 tablespoons all-purpose unbleached flour
- 1½ cups cooked and chopped chicken or turkey
- 1 teaspoon fresh or dried herbs of your choice

1 In large bowl, combine eggs, water and milk. With electric mixer, beat on medium speed for 1 minute. Beat in lard and salt.
2 In separate bowl, whisk together 2 cups flour and baking powder. Add gradually to egg mixture, beating on low speed. Using rubber spatula, stir in more flour, up to ¼ cup if needed, to make stiff dough.
3 Turn dough onto floured board, and knead into ball. Sprinkle more flour on board and, using rolling pin, roll out dough as thinly as possible, about 1/16 inch.
4 Using pizza wheel, slice dough into strips ¼ inch wide, then slice again in half crosswise. Transfer noodles to wire rack and cover loosely with lint-free cloth. Leave to dry for 2 hours.
5 To make soup, place broth in stockpot and bring to boil. Whisk in flour to thicken, and then add poultry and noodles. Reduce heat to medium, and cook for 30 to 35 minutes, or until noodles are tender and broth is thickened. Stir in herbs.
6 Serve piping hot.

Something Sweet

A touch of sugar adds a touch of home to delicious breads.

By EVAN BLAKE WELCH

One tempting whiff of the aroma from my mom's freshly baked bread pudding was all she needed to call my friends and me in from our various outdoor pursuits. How could we not drop everything to taste that mouthwatering creation?

Seated around the table with ruffled hair and dirt clinging to our shirts, we'd devour the treat, and unknowingly develop memories of what it meant to be home. The pudding was gone within minutes of our arrival – Mom always said that was the best compliment a baker could receive.

When the smell of sugary goodness is coupled with the hearty scent of bread, the reaction is universal. All neighbors, friends and even enemies are compelled to join together, and sometimes come to an agreement.

One such tasty treat, shortbread, was born of a battle in 12th-century Scotland when mothers and bakers fought to call the butter-filled cookie shortbread instead of short biscuit, to avoid the ominous biscuit tax. No doubt victory was secured with the help of a few sweet and crispy bribes.

Once a morsel nibbled on almost exclusively by wealthy Scots, shortbread can now be savored around the world by those who desire a rich, homey taste as a dessert or snack.

Whether these scrumptious relics of home are baked for your favorite holiday or an afternoon treat, sweet-tasting breads are sure to evoke treasured feelings of home in every heart.

Bake up your own homemade memories with the recipes that follow.

LEFT TO RIGHT: JIM FRANCO/COURTESY TEN SPEED PRESS; KAREN K. WILL

French Toast Coffee Cake

By Joy Pierson, Angel Ramos and Jorge Pineda
(photograph on opposite page)
Yields 8 to 10 servings.

1 cup vegan cream cheese
3 cups plain unsweetened soy milk
3 tablespoons unrefined sugar
1 tablespoon egg replacer
1½ tablespoons fresh ginger juice
2 tablespoons ground cinnamon, divided
8 slices sourdough bread, cut into 1- to 2-inch rounds
¼ cup coconut sugar
2 tablespoons buttery spread, melted
2 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour
Maple syrup and fresh fruit, optional

1 Preheat oven to 400 F. Oil 9-inch springform pan; wrap base in aluminum foil to prevent leaking. Set aside.
2 Combine cream cheese, soy milk, sugar, egg replacer, ginger juice and 1 tablespoon cinnamon in blender, and blend for 5 minutes. Transfer mixture to large, shallow dish. Add bread, and let sit for 5 minutes, turning bread pieces occasionally.
3 In bowl, mix coconut sugar, remaining cinnamon, buttery spread and flour until of crumby consistency.
4 Layer half the bread, half the cream cheese mixture and half the coconut sugar mixture in prepared pan. Repeat with remaining bread, cream cheese mixture, and coconut sugar mixture.
5 Bake for about 45 minutes, or until golden brown and cake tester comes out clean. Cool in pan for 15 minutes.
6 Unmold coffee cake and cut into wedges. Serve with maple syrup and fresh fruit, if desired.

The above recipe has been reprinted with permission from Vegan Holiday Cooking from Candle Café *by Joy Pierson, Angel Ramos and Jorge Pineda, published by Ten Speed Press, 2014.*

Shortbread Cookies With Orange Peel and Thyme

By Joyce Ellenbecker

This shortbread cookie recipe is an ideal accompaniment for a quiet afternoon tea. A food processor or blender prepares the dough in minutes, which makes it an excellent choice for any last-minute parties. Keeping the dough in the refrigerator makes it easier to slice. Yields 2 dozen cookies.

½ cup pecans
½ cup oatmeal
1 teaspoon thyme
1 teaspoon finely chopped orange peel
¼ cup butter
½ cup confectioner's sugar
½ cup all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon milk

1 Process pecans in food processor or blender for 1 to 2 minutes, or until finely chopped. Add remaining ingredients, one at a time, processing for 15 to 30 seconds after each addition.
2 Turn dough onto countertop, and dust lightly with additional flour. Form into roll, and wrap in wax paper. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
3 Preheat oven to 350 F.
4 Slice roll into ½-inch-thick cookies. Place on ungreased cookie sheet, and bake for 12 to 15 minutes.

Coconut Bread Pudding

By Karen K. Will
Yields 8 servings.

½ cup sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup whole milk
1 cup coconut milk
½ cup sweetened, shredded coconut
2 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon vanilla, divided
1 cup stale ½-inch cubes bread
2 egg whites
2 tablespoons confectioner's sugar

1 Preheat oven to 350 F. Butter 8-inch or 2-quart baking dish; set aside.
2 In large bowl, combine sugar, salt and eggs. Gradually whisk in milks. Add coconut, butter and ½ teaspoon vanilla.
3 Scatter bread cubes in prepared dish, and pour milk mixture over top. Place dish in pan of hot water, with water coming up about ½ inch around sides. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes, or until firm.
4 Meanwhile, beat egg whites until stiff. Add confectioner's sugar and remaining vanilla, and continue beating until very stiff. Spread over cooked pudding, creating peaks and valleys. Sprinkle with a little additional shredded coconut, and heat until meringue is light brown. Serve warm or chilled.

Chocolate-Bacon Muffins

By Karen K. Will

These special muffins qualify as sweet and savory, and for anyone who scoffs at the bacon-chocolate pairing, try it before you knock it. The salty, smokiness of the bacon marries with the sweetness of chocolate, and a perfect union is formed. It may become a new favorite! Yields 12 muffins.

6 slices bacon
1¾ cups all-purpose, unbleached flour
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
¼ cup unsweetened natural cocoa
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup warm water
¼ cup walnut oil or melted butter
1 tablespoon strong coffee
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 large egg
¾ cup semisweet mini chocolate chips, divided

1 Preheat oven to 400 F. Place 12 muffin cup liners in muffin tin; set aside.
2 Fry bacon until cooked but not crispy. Transfer to plate lined with paper towels, and let cool. Chop into ¼-inch pieces. Set aside.
3 In large mixing bowl, combine flour, brown sugar, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda and salt, and whisk to blend.
4 In separate bowl, combine water, oil, coffee, vanilla and egg. Stir in ½ cup chocolate chips and half the bacon. Add to flour mixture, and stir just until moist.
5 Divide batter evenly among muffin cup liners. Sprinkle remaining chocolate chips and remaining bacon evenly over batter.
6 Bake for 15 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes before serving. Store leftovers in refrigerator.

Blueberry-Infused Homemade Bread

By Jonathan Sadowski

As I was wracking my brain trying to think of a way to use all these blueberries as I was sipping my homemade blueberry milk, I thought for a moment, said "Huzzah!" and I got to work on this recipe. It has a tinge of extra sweetness, and its coloring is quite unique.

3 cups all-purpose flour
½ cup blueberry milk
½ cup warm water
4 tablespoons melted butter
3 tablespoons agave nectar
1¼ teaspoon salt
2¼ teaspoon (1 packet) yeast

1 In large mixing bowl, combine all ingredients, and stir until no dry spots are visible. Cover bowl with plastic wrap or towel; let sit for 1 hour.
2 After dough has risen, place it in greased loaf pan. Cover and let rise for another hour.
3 Preheat oven to 350 F.
4 Bake for about 35 minutes, or until bread sounds hollow when tapped.
5 Turn bread out of pan, and let cool on wire rack for about 10 minutes.
NOTE: The baking process is not complete until the cooling process has been completed, so no matter how tempting it is, do not skip this step.

Chocolate Chip Banana Bread

By Morgan Crumm

You would think I should have baking down by now. I have been cooking and baking for most of my life, and I left culinary school with a perfect 4.0 grade-point average. I have churned out flawless souffles and stunning

LEFT TO RIGHT: KAREN K. WILL; JONATHAN SADOWSKI

Glazed Orange-Pecan Bread

By Toni Leland
Yields 12 servings.

¼ cup butter or margarine, softened
¾ cup sugar
2 medium eggs, beaten
2 teaspoons grated orange rind
2 cups all-purpose flour
2½ teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
¾ cup plus 2½ teaspoons orange juice, divided
½ cup chopped pecans
½ cup sifted confectioner's sugar

1 Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease 9-by-5-inch loaf pan; set aside.
2 In bowl, cream butter. Gradually beat in sugar. Add eggs and orange rind, and mix well.
3 In separate bowl, combine flour, baking powder and salt. Add to creamed mixture, alternating with ¾ cup orange juice, beginning and ending with flour mixture, mixing well after each addition. Stir in pecans.
4 Pour batter into prepared pan, and bake for 50 to 55 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pan for 10 minutes; remove from pan and cool completely.
5 Combine remaining orange juice with confectioner's sugar; drizzle over cooled loaf.
6 Wrap bread in plastic wrap and let stand overnight before serving.

French fruit tarts ... and yet ... sometimes I struggle with the simplest of baked goods.

Both because I find it completely irresistible on my plate – and lips – and because I can never seem to get it quite right, banana bread has always been my kryptonite.

Whether developing my own recipes or attempting to follow one in a cookbook, something always went wrong in the execution.

Recently, with a bunch of bananas steadily blackening on my countertop, I decided to give it another go – and this time something magical happened: success!

Many banana bread recipes request buttermilk for its signature tang and acid content, but this go-round I opted for something a bit different. Pineapple juice stands in to lend sweetness, gentle acidity, and a fruity boost to the banana flavor.

Dark chocolate chips provide depth and contrast, but you could omit them or swap them out for ½ cup coarsely chopped nuts if desired.

I find that the bread batter bakes more evenly in a Bundt pan than it does in a loaf pan or cake pan. Be sure to grease (I use butter) and flour the pan for best results.

2½ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
1 cup dark chocolate chips
3 ripe (very spotty) bananas
1 cup brown sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
1 cup unsweetened pineapple juice
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
3 large eggs

1 Preheat oven to 375 F. Grease and flour standard-sized Bundt pan, making sure to get into all nooks and crannies. Place pan on rimmed baking sheet; set aside.
2 In large bowl, whisk together flour, salt, baking powder and baking soda until all ingredients are thoroughly combined. Stir in dark chocolate chips; set aside.
3 In medium-size bowl, use fork to mash bananas with brown sugar.
4 Use whisk to thoroughly incorporate oil, pineapple juice and vanilla into banana mixture.
5 Whisk eggs, one at a time, into banana mixture until well-blended.
6 Use wooden spoon or rubber spatula to make well in center of dry ingredients. Pour banana mixture into well, and stir until no visible pockets of dry ingredients remain. (Be careful that you don't mix too aggressively, though, which could deliver a tougher texture to the finished bread.)
7 Pour batter into prepared pan, and bake for about 45 minutes, or until cake is golden brown on top and toothpick inserted near center comes out clean or with just a few moist crumbs clinging to it.
8 Cool in pan on cooling rack for at least 20 minutes, or until bread starts to pull away from sides of pan, before inverting onto cooling rack to finish cooling completely.

TOP TO BOTTOM: LORI DUNN; MORGAN CHUMA

Chocolate Chip-Banana Muffin

Recipe and photograph
by Laura Theodore

These moist muffins are sweet but not overly so, making them a scrumptious treat for breakfast, an afternoon snack, or dessert. This recipe uses ripe bananas rather than eggs for binding. Wheat germ adds both texture and nutrition, while dark chocolate contributes antioxidants, not to mention a decadent taste.

Yields 6 large muffins.

1 cup whole wheat flour
1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
½ teaspoon sea salt
½ cup brown sugar
½ cup toasted wheat germ
1¼ cups plain or vanilla nondairy milk, plus more as needed
3 ripe bananas, mashed until smooth
¼ cup vegetable oil
½ cup vegan dark chocolate chips
3½ ounces vegan dark chocolate, chopped

1 Preheat oven to 400 F. Oil six-cup standard muffin tin; set aside.

2 Put flours, baking powder and salt in large bowl and stir with dry whisk to combine. Add brown sugar and wheat germ and stir with whisk to combine. Stir in nondairy milk, bananas and oil and mix just until incorporated.

3 Stir in chocolate chips and chopped chocolate. Mixture will be thick, but if it seems overly dry, stir in a bit more nondairy milk, 1 tablespoon at a time. Don't overmix or muffins will be tough.

4 Mound mixture into prepared muffin cups. Put pan on baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes. Decrease temperature to 375 F and bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until golden and toothpick inserted in middle of muffin comes out almost clean.

5 Place pan on wire rack and loosen sides of each muffin with knife. Let cool for about 15 minutes. Carefully remove muffins. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Freckled, Pumpkin Yeast Bread

Recipe and photograph
by Renee Pottle

Autumn is actually pumpkin season for many, which means pumpkin-flavored items are popping up everywhere. The airwaves and reader boards are filled with ads for pumpkin lattes, pumpkin scones, pumpkin donuts, pumpkin ice cream treats and even pumpkin milkshakes.

I get it. I like pumpkin too. But all that sweetness is a bit much for me. So when I found myself with leftover pumpkin puree after making a batch of homemade Pumpkin-Blueberry Muffins, I knew just what to make – a pumpkin-flavored yeast bread that wasn't sweet and that left out the typical pumpkin pie related spices.

Ingredient Substitutes

1. The bread is freckled with chopped pecans, but toasted walnuts or even dried cranberries would work equally well.

2. Pumpkin puree adds a savory flavor and helps keep the bread soft. Cooked, mashed buttercup or Hubbard winter squash would make a nice substitute, although it would give the bread a more delicate flavor.

3. I used some Kamut® flour to add whole grains and because its nutty flavor enhances the pumpkin. White whole wheat or additional all-purpose flour could be used instead.

1½ cups Kamut flour
3 cups all-purpose or bread flour

1½ tablespoons brown sugar
1½ teaspoons salt
2¼ teaspoons active dry yeast
1¼ cups pumpkin puree
¾ cup plain yogurt or buttermilk
2 tablespoons olive oil
¾ cup chopped pecans

1 Add ingredients except pecans to large bowl or stand mixer bowl. Mix well to combine.

2 Add nuts. Knead by hand until smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes, or using a stand mixer to knead dough for 5 to 8 minutes.

3 Place in greased bowl, cover and let rise in warm place until almost doubled, about 1½ hours.

4 Gently fold to deflate.

5 Shape dough into a ball and place in floured brotform or proofing container. You could also shape the dough into a free-form oval. Cover and let rise 30 to 40 minutes, or until doubled in size.

6 Preheat oven and baking stone to 400 F.

7 Gently flip bread out of brotform and onto parchment-lined peel. Score round with sharp knife.

8 Slide loaf onto baking stone and bake for 40 to 45 minutes, or until interior temperature reaches 195 to 200 F.

9 Remove from oven and let cool for up to 1 hour before slicing.

Vegan Banana Bread With Sunflower Seeds

By Laura Theodore

This bread is a true quick bread, in that it prepares for the oven in about 10 minutes. Its great slathered with whole fruit preserves or your favorite nut butter.

Yields 1 loaf.

1⅓ cups sliced bananas (about 1 very large or 2 small)
1⅔ cups nondairy milk (a thicker variety works best), divided
2 cups whole wheat pastry flour
4 tablespoons ground golden flaxseeds
2¼ teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon sea salt
1 cup raw unsweetened shredded dried coconut
½ cup Sucanat, brown sugar, or your preferred dry sweetener
½ cup pitted and diced dates
½ cup roasted, unsalted sunflower seeds

1 Preheat oven to 350 F. Lightly coat 9-by-5-inch loaf pan with vegan margarine.

2 Put banana slices and ⅓ cup nondairy milk in small bowl and, using potato masher or large fork, mash until smooth.

3 Put flour, flaxseeds, baking powder, cinnamon and sea salt in large bowl and stir with dry whisk to combine. Add coconut and Sucanat; stir with whisk to combine. Stir in remaining nondairy milk and mix until incorporated.

4 Fold in dates and sunflower seeds. Transfer mixture to prepared pan and smooth top.

5 Bake for 45 to 55 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center of bread comes out clean.

6 Put pan on wire rack and let cool 5 minutes. Gently loosen sides of bread with knife. Carefully invert loaf onto wire rack.

7 Allow loaf to cool for 20 to 30 minutes before slicing.

8 Covered tightly and stored in refrigerator, loaf will keep for 3 days.

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How to Bake Using an EARTH OVEN

Once you've tasted bread baked in this old-world structure, you'll never go back to baking in the kitchen oven.

Article and photographs by
LYDIA NOYES

Baking in an earth oven is a wonderful culinary experience. Also called cob, an Old English term for "lump," earth ovens are built with layers of clay, straw and mud that dry into a smooth brick-like substance. This style of architecture has been used throughout the world, from the adobe homes of the American Southwest to 500-year-old cob homes in Devon, England.

When properly cared for and kept out of bad weather, cob structures retain heat very well and can last for centuries. Unlike the convection oven in your kitchen that simply heats the air around your food, cob ovens use three forms of heat transfer: radiant heat from the walls, conduction heat from the floor, and hot air convected throughout the oven space. This creates a blisteringly hot steam that caramelizes the sugars on the outside of a loaf and forms a thick, chewy crust. After cooking your bread in a cob oven, the results from your kitchen oven will seem bland and dry.

Building your oven

Numerous resources are available concerning how to cheaply construct a cob oven, often using predominately local supplies. When my husband and I moved onto our historic Appalachian homestead, we were happy to discover that the previous inhabitants had built a gorgeous earth oven just off the kitchen. These original builders relied on the book *Build Your Own Earth Oven* by Kiko Denzer and Hannah Field. This fabulous resource will answer every question you have from sourcing materials to deciding on a size, as well as give you a look at the rich history of this ancient cooking method.

Using your oven

Whether you build your own oven or inherit it like we did, cob ovens are dead easy to use with some prior planning. Give yourself two to five hours for the entire process, depending on how much food you want to make and the required oven temperature. Begin the baking process by following the steps below.

First, soak the oven baking door in a bucket of water. A good soak for a couple hours ensures total saturation and will prevent it from catching fire. The water will also produce steam for the baking process to keep your bread moist.

Build a fire in the oven using small, dry pieces of wood. Kindling-like pieces are best because they have a lot of surface area. The goal is to burn small loads of wood fast and hot. Feel free to use scrap lumber, but make sure that it hasn't been treated with toxic chemicals you don't

want in your food. Plan on burning several loads of wood to get the oven to the desired baking temperature.

Learn to estimate the oven temperature by touching the outside. It should be hot but not unbearable for a few seconds of contact. One to three hours is typically long enough for the oven to fully heat up. When the black soot on the outside begins to burn off, the oven has exceeded 600 degrees Fahrenheit, which is typically hot enough for one bread bake. Hotter ovens will cook better pizzas, so let the oven go for another hour or so for exceptionally delicious crusts.

Pull out the remains of the fire with a metal ash shovel. Be careful to get the edges of the oven. The interior temperature will be too hot for your hands to handle for long, so wear gloves! When the embers are gone, remove the ashes with a brush and clean the floor space to prepare it for food.

Next, "soak" your oven with heat. Immediately after firing, the oven floor will be at different temperatures, which could cause uneven baking. To even out the temperature, close the oven opening with a metal cookie sheet or something similar and let the oven set for 15 to 30 minutes, though the time isn't too important. Don't use the baking door for this step.

Now, get a feel for the interior temperature. If you can hold your hand inside for eight seconds, it's ready for bread. If it's too hot for that, you can cook a pizza or wait for the oven to lose some heat.

Load your loaves into the oven with a peel (a thin-bladed paddle) or a narrow wooden board. Use cornmeal on the peel to help the bread slip off easily. It will go directly on the floor of the oven. Immediately block the oven opening with the baking door to trap in steam.

While baking, check your bread every few minutes to ensure it doesn't burn. Your method and baking time will change depending on how hot you have the oven: bread can be cooked "fast and hot" or "slow and cool." Earth oven prowess comes from practice and intuition, so keep trying different things until you get a feel for it!

When the crust of your bread is brown and textured, pull it out of the oven with the peel. The oven will retain heat for several hours so you can plan out your baking to maximize the available heat by cooking multiple dishes over several hours, starting with pizza, then bread, followed by a casserole and finally cookies or brownies.

Tasting homemade bread or pizzas straight from a cob oven is a supremely satisfying experience. Put some time and effort in crafting an oven and perfecting your baking technique and you will be enjoying fresh baked bread from your backyard for years to come.

Adobe Bread

Begin to fire your oven about 3 hours before you plan to bake. The whole process takes about 1½ hours, so plan accordingly.

3 cups very warm water
3 teaspoons salt
¼ cup sugar, honey or sweetener
3 tablespoons baker's yeast
7 to 9 cups flour, any kind
Optional: If you use whole rye or other specialty flour without much gluten, add ½ cup gluten flour
Cornmeal

1 In large bowl, combine water, salt and sugar. Sprinkle yeast on top, and allow to foam, about 15 minutes. Mix in flour until mixture becomes stiff but not dry.

2 Turn onto floured countertop (hint: sprinkle cold water on the countertop and smooth lengths of plastic wrap on it to facilitate easier cleanup), and knead until springy, about 10 minutes. If you add flour during kneading, make sure dough remains moist, not dry.

3 Place dough in oiled bowl and allow to rise until almost doubled in size. Sprinkle cornmeal on cookie sheets.

4 Divide dough into 4 equal pieces, and either roll into long loaves or shape into round ones. Allow to rise again until almost doubled in size. Near end of this rising, remove ashes from the oven, scuffle the floor clean, and close the door with a damp towel to soak.

5 Carry risen loaves carefully to oven. Open door and set aside. Gently set each loaf on peel, position peel inside oven, and with quick thrust, set loaves on oven floor. Close door.

6 Bread should bake in about 20 minutes, but there are many variables with your handmade oven. Keep your nose and intuition attuned for when bread is done. Loaves should be brown and crusty when done, and you can tap on loaf and listen for hollow sound to double check.

7 Use peel to remove baked loaves, and allow them to cool for 10 to 15 minutes before slicing.

Flatbread Fiesta!

Call it tortilla, naan, matzo or crackers, there's a version in every culture.

By JEAN TELLER

The act of adding ground grains to water, then mixing in a bit of salt, has created simple doughs throughout the ages. No one knows when the recipe was first used – it's that ancient. Our ancestors rolled the dough flat, and baked it on rocks, inside ovens, or on early griddles, and we still emulate this life-sustaining act with tortillas, pitas, matzo, naan and more.

Depending on the place and taste, this simple recipe may include yeast and herbs, and the cooked flatbread may be served flat, wrapped around fresh produce, or filled with meat and veggies and drizzled with a dressing.

Whatever you decide to do, make these recipes your own with the addition of favorite flavors and ingredients.

Homemade Whole-Grain Tortillas

By Tabitha Alterman

Making homemade tortillas takes a little more time than buying them, but your efforts will be rewarded with delicious, nutritious tortillas that burst with fresh flavor and no preservatives. Using whole-wheat flour ups the nutrition ante as well. Making them from scratch also allows you to use locally milled, organic wheat, if you are lucky enough to have a source for it. To search for organic mills where you live, visit localharvest.org. Yields about 10 tortillas.

2 cups whole-wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons olive oil, butter or lard
½ to 1 cup warm water

1 Whisk together flour, baking powder and salt. Stir in oil.

2 Add water, 1 teaspoon at a time, until dough can be gathered into ball. Let dough rest for 15 to 20 minutes. (It is almost always a good idea to let whole-grain doughs rest a while so the grains will absorb some liquid and soften up.)

3 Knead dough on floured work surface for a few minutes, and then let rest for another 10 minutes or so.

4 Pinch or cut dough into about 10 small chunks, and roll into balls. Cover with towel, and allow to rest for a few minutes more.

5 Roll each ball of dough into thin round on floured work surface, adding more flour as needed. Layer rolled-out tortillas between wax paper while waiting to be cooked.

6 Heat ungreased skillet or griddle to medium-high heat, and cook each tortilla for about 30 seconds per side. It will puff a bit and form a few bubbles. Keep cooked tortillas warm in oven or wrapped in kitchen towel.

Homemade Matzo

By Jo Ann Gardner

It's fun and challenging to make matzo and try to complete the whole job in less than 18 minutes. (This is approximately the amount of time it takes for water mixed with flour to begin to ferment, or leaven itself.) However, among other requirements, unless the flour is certified for Passover, these would not be considered kosher. Yields 4 (7-inch) matzos.

2 cups unbleached flour, or 1½ cups all-purpose and ½ cup whole-wheat
½ to ¾ cup cold water

1 Preheat oven to 500 F.

2 Mound flour, and make well in center. Pour in ½ cup water, and work into dough, adding more water as necessary so dough ball is barely sticky.

3 Pull dough apart into 4 pieces the size of golf balls. With floured rolling pin, roll out balls into rough squares or circles as thin as possible (so you can almost see through them). Place on lightly greased cookie sheet, or nonstick sheet, and prick dough in rows with fork.

4 Bake for about 10 minutes, or until edges turn golden brown.

NOTE: These are best when hot and soft. When completely cool, they won't be as crisp as commercial types. Store leftovers in airtight container.

Homemade Crackers and Hummus

By Annie Kelley

It's easy to make homemade crackers. The nice thing about making crackers at home is that you have the option of making a lot of different styles – and the opportunity to make them more healthful than those at the market. The downside is the shelf life is only about 5 to 7 days, but the batches are usually small enough to freeze, or only make them for big gatherings.

Annie's Crackers

2 cups whole-wheat pastry flour
1 teaspoon sea salt
⅔ cup warm water
⅓ cup good-quality olive oil

1 In bowl, mix ingredients together with fork or spoon, just until combined. (At this point, you can add some extras. I like to add flax seed meal, sunflower seeds, black sesame seeds and garlic granules. Add some rosemary if you like. Add whatever flavors and herbs you and your family likes. If you put in too much, it will start feeling dry, and if that happens, you can add a little more oil.)

2 Preheat oven to 375 F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper, and set aside.

3 Oil hands and start patting dough out as thin as possible.

4 Using pizza cutter, ravioli wheel or sharp paring knife, cut dough into squares or rectangles. (At this point, I grind a little bit of fresh black pepper and sea salt onto the tops of them.)

5 Place dough squares on prepared baking sheet. (Depending on size of baking pan, you may need to divide dough in half and do it in 2 batches.)

6 Bake for about 15 minutes, or until crackers are golden brown.

7 Transfer crackers to cooling racks; they will crisp up as they cool.

NOTE: Instead of patting out the dough with your hands, you can lay a sheet of parchment paper on the counter, and use a rolling pin to roll the dough out as thin as possible. This will create a more uniform dough, which will allow you to square up the dough a little better. The crackers will look a little less "homemade," but they will bake more evenly.

Basic Pita Dough

By Debbie Whittaker
Yields 8 pitas.

1 package active dry yeast
1 teaspoon honey
1½ cups warm water
¾ teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons olive oil (flavored with sage, rosemary or thyme, if desired)
1½ cups whole-wheat flour
1½ to 2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

1 In large mixing bowl, stir together yeast, honey and water. Add salt and oil. Add whole-wheat flour, stirring vigorously for 3 minutes. Gradually add and stir in enough all-purpose flour to make soft dough that pulls away from side of bowl.

2 Knead dough on lightly floured work surface for 5 to 10 minutes, or until smooth and elastic, using only enough additional flour to keep dough from sticking. Place dough back in bowl; cover and let rest in warm place for 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

3 Preheat oven to at least 500 F, with pizza stone or oiled baking sheet on lowest rack.

4 Punch down dough and cut into 8 pieces. Shape each piece into smooth, round ball with no creases. Remove 2 balls, and cover rest.

5 Working with 2 balls of dough, flatten them into disks, then roll out with rolling pin until each is ⅛- to ¼-inch thick. Using cornmeal-covered peel or spatula, slide 2 pitas onto hot pizza stone or baking sheet. Bake for 5 minutes. Don't open oven door during baking.

6 Place baked pitas in paper bag to keep soft while they cool. Repeat with remaining pieces of dough.

7 Store cooled pitas in plastic bag at room temperature, or freeze for longer storage.

Hummus

Annie's Crackers are great as appetizers, topped with something as simple as a small piece of cheese ... or hummus. Here's my favorite hummus recipe, made with canned chickpeas.

¼ cup lemon juice
¼ cup water
2 cans (15 ounces each) garbanzo beans, one drained, one undrained
¼ cup raw sesame seeds
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 garlic cloves, peeled, or to taste
1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon sea salt

1 Put all ingredients into blender and process until smooth.

LEFT TO RIGHT: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM (2)/ANGELAGR, CAMACAT

Indian Flatbread

By Susan Belsinger

These puffy disks of bread are simple, quick and versatile. Prepare a batch of dough and leave it covered to rest – it takes only minutes to roll out a few flatbreads and bake them on a griddle or in a heavy skillet. The dough can refrigerated overnight. *Flatbreads and Flavors*, by Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid (William Morrow, 1995), has detailed instructions for rolling and cooking them, which I have adapted here. Yields 8 flatbreads.

1¼ cups whole-wheat flour
1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon sea salt
1 tablespoon olive oil
¾ cup warm water

1 In bowl, combine flours and salt. Drizzle oil over top, and work in with fingers or wooden spoon. Add water, and work contents into soft dough.

2 Turn dough out onto lightly floured surface and knead for 3 to 5 minutes, or until smooth. Add a little more water if dough is too dry, or a little more flour if sticky. Wrap dough in plastic wrap or cover with inverted bowl, and let rest for at least 30 minutes.

3 Cut dough into 8 equal pieces, and roll each into ball. Place balls on lightly floured surface and flatten gently with hand. Using lightly floured rolling pin, roll each ball into 6-inch round. Don't flip dough over while rolling or it won't puff as well during baking.

4 Heat iron griddle or skillet over medium heat.

5 Place 1 flatbread on hot surface for about 15 seconds, then flip. After 1 to 1½ minutes, little bubbles should rise on top surface, and bottom should be flecked golden brown. Flip to precooked side. It should begin to puff up a little. Press on it gently with clean cotton towel to encourage it to puff. (If it doesn't puff, it will still taste good.) Wrap cooked flatbreads loosely in towel to keep warm. Serve immediately with butter or olive oil.

NOTE: You may cook these in advance, cool them, and wrap them in foil. Reheat in oven at 300 to 350 F until warmed through.

2 Serve as dip or sandwich spread.

NOTE: For even better flavor, make hummus ahead of time and refrigerate for a while to allow flavors to meld.

Masa Flour Tortillas

By Farm Aid and homegrown.org

Corn tortillas require Masa Harina flour, which is corn (nixtamal or hominy) treated with a diluted alkaline solution and ground into a fine flour.

First method

This first time, I used pickling lime (calcium hydroxide or "cal") to make the nixtamal. Making it increases the nutritional density of the corn by freeing up proteins and B vitamins.

2 pounds dry corn (dent or flour are recommended, but field corn is fine if you can't find either)
3 quarts water
½ cup pickling lime*

1 Rinse corn and remove debris.

2 Place water in large nonreactive pot – stainless steel or copper; do not use aluminum. Add pickling lime, and allow to dissolve, then add corn. Bring to rolling boil, and allow to boil, covered, for 15 to 20 minutes.

3 Remove from heat, and let cool. Refrigerate mixture for 8 to 10 hours or overnight.

4 Corn should now be plumped up and skins should be falling off. Skim any loose skins off top of water. Strain nixtamal in colander, and rinse. Roll kernels in hands to remove excess loose skins. (Our corn came out of the alkaline solution almost black, and once the skins were removed they were a rainbow of colors.)

5 Rinse nixtamal at least 2 more times. If corn isn't rinsed well enough, it will be bitter. Once corn is no longer wet, you can run it through a grain mill. (With our mill, within about 30 minutes, we had run 8 cups flour through 3 times.)

6 For every 2 cups of flour, add about 1⅓ cups water and 1 teaspoon salt. Allow to rest for 20 minutes.

7 Roll dough into balls about 1½ inches in diameter. Slightly flatten and put in center of tortilla press between 2 sheets of wax paper.

8 Cook each tortilla on hot griddle for 30 seconds to 1 minute on each side. Allow to cool thoroughly, and then freeze until needed.

NOTE: These Masa Flour Tortillas are really tasty. Ours came out a cool bluish-purple color, which makes them distinctive.

*Pickling lime and lye water (mentioned in the recipe on the next page) are caustic and can cause irritation and/or burns if wet hands are exposed to either for too long.

If the mixtures come into contact with your skin, rinse immediately. If

Joe Coca

Homemade Crackers

By Adrienne Kane, from *United States of Bread*
Yields 40 to 50 servings.

These homemade crackers balance sweet and salty, and taste nutty from the whole-wheat flour. *United States of Bread* (Running Press, 2014), by Adrienne Kane, contains 75 vintage American bread recipes. The following is from the chapter "Flatbreads & Fry Breads."

"The most difficult part to homemade crackers is rolling them out. The thinner the dough is rolled, the crisper the cracker will be. This dough is not too sticky, and the gluten structure is not too strong, so rolling the dough is relatively easy. Just make sure your work surface is well-floured; it would be a shame to roll out your dough only to have it stick, making the transfer to the baking sheet impossible."

- 1¼ cups (6¼ ounces) whole-wheat flour
- ¾ teaspoon table salt, plus more for sprinkling
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, chilled
- 5 tablespoons ice water

1 Preheat oven to 400 F. Arrange racks on bottom and top third of oven. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper; set aside.
2 In bowl of food processor, pulse flour, salt and honey until combined. Add butter, and continue to pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal.
3 With food processor running, add water, and continue to process until dough begins to form ball. This may require a bit more water. If so, add a bit of ice water by the teaspoonful.
4 Place dough on well-floured work surface. Lightly flour top of dough as well, and roll out to no more than ⅛-inch thick.
5 With cookie cutter or 1½-inch biscuit cutter, cut dough into cracker shapes. Alternately, to make squares, use sharp knife or pizza cutter to cut 1½-inch squares.
6 Place crackers on prepared baking sheets. The crackers will spread very little during baking, so it is fine to place them close. With tines of fork, prick each cracker several times. Sprinkle additional salt on top, patting it lightly into crackers.
7 Bake for 8 to 12 minutes, or until lightly browned around edges, rotating pans halfway through baking process. Baking time will be dependent upon how thick the crackers are.
8 Cool crackers slightly on baking sheets, and then transfer to cooling rack and allow them to cool completely. Homemade crackers will continue to firm and crisp as they cool. Store in airtight container for up to 1 week.

any spills onto any surface, wipe up immediately and rinse area. I found out the hard way that the compounds will etch stainless steel (even though it's nonreactive) and granite countertops if not cleaned up right away.

Second method

The other method of making nixtamal is by using wood ash.

It's important that the wood ash is from hardwood, and that it's thoroughly burned, resulting in nearly white ash.

Add 2 double handfuls of wood ash to 3 quarts water. Boil for 1 hour, and let sit overnight. This creates lye water* (also used to make soap).

Strain the precipitated ash out of the water before using.

Use this lye water the same as you would the water with the pickling lime added. Follow the rest of the instructions as listed in the first method.

This recipe was originally published as "Homemade Tortillas 101" by Rachel Hoff for homegrown.org. *Check out Rachel's blog at* www.dogislandfarm.com, *and share your own food skills at* www.homegrown.org.

Naan (Leavened Bread)

By Jeeti Gandhi
Yields 8 large naan.

- 2½ teaspoons active dry yeast
- ¼ cup warm water
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- ⅔ cup milk, room temperature
- ⅔ cup plus 2 tablespoons plain, low-fat yogurt, whisked
- 1 egg, beaten (extra ¼ cup yogurt can be substituted for egg, if desired)
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 4½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 2 teaspoons poppy seeds

1 In bowl, combine yeast, water and sugar; let stand for 3 to 4 minutes, or until frothy.
2 In separate bowl, mix together milk, yogurt, egg and butter; set aside.
3 In large mixing bowl, sift together flour, baking powder and salt. Make well in center, and add yeast and milk mixtures. Fold all ingredients together, then knead until smooth.
4 Cover bowl tightly with foil or plastic wrap, and set in warm place for 45 to 60 minutes, or until dough has almost doubled initial volume.
5 Preheat oven to 400 F. Grease baking sheets; set aside.
6 Divide dough into 8 equal portions, and shape each into ball. Work with 1 portion at a time, keeping rest covered with damp cloth or plastic wrap. Flatten ball slightly with fingertips, and roll out on floured pastry board with rolling pin. Pull 1 edge to give naan a tear shape, which should be about 10 inches long and about 6 inches wide at widest point.
7 Brush top surface with oil, and sprinkle with poppy seeds. Place on prepared baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough.
8 Bake for 10 to 12 minutes. Serve hot.

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www.hodgsonmill.com

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www.jackscountrystore.com

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www.kingarthurflour.com

Lehi Roller Mills
801-768-4401
www.lehirollermills.com

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www.mariasriverfarms.com

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406-600-7400
www.montanaglutenfree.com

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www.csbellco.com

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www.vermontwoodstove.com

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ORGANIZATIONS/ WEBSITES

www.bbga.org
The Bread Bakers Guild of America (or artisan bakers)

www.breadexperience.com
The Bread Experience (recipes, supplies, and a baking blog)

www.breadworld.com
BreadWorld.com (from ACH Foods and Fleischmann's)

www.thefreshloaf.com
The Fresh Loaf (amateur bakers and artisan bread enthusiasts)

Independent Bakers Association www.ibabaker.com
Independent Bakers Association (trade association)

Everything you need to

BAKE BETTER Bread

THE URBAN
EST. 1998
Homemaker

Grain Mills

Bulk Grains

Bosch Mixers

Baking Supplies

Mill Your Own Flour Freshly milled flour is more nutritious and better for you than enriched white flour that's mass produced and stripped of vital nutrients and essential oils.

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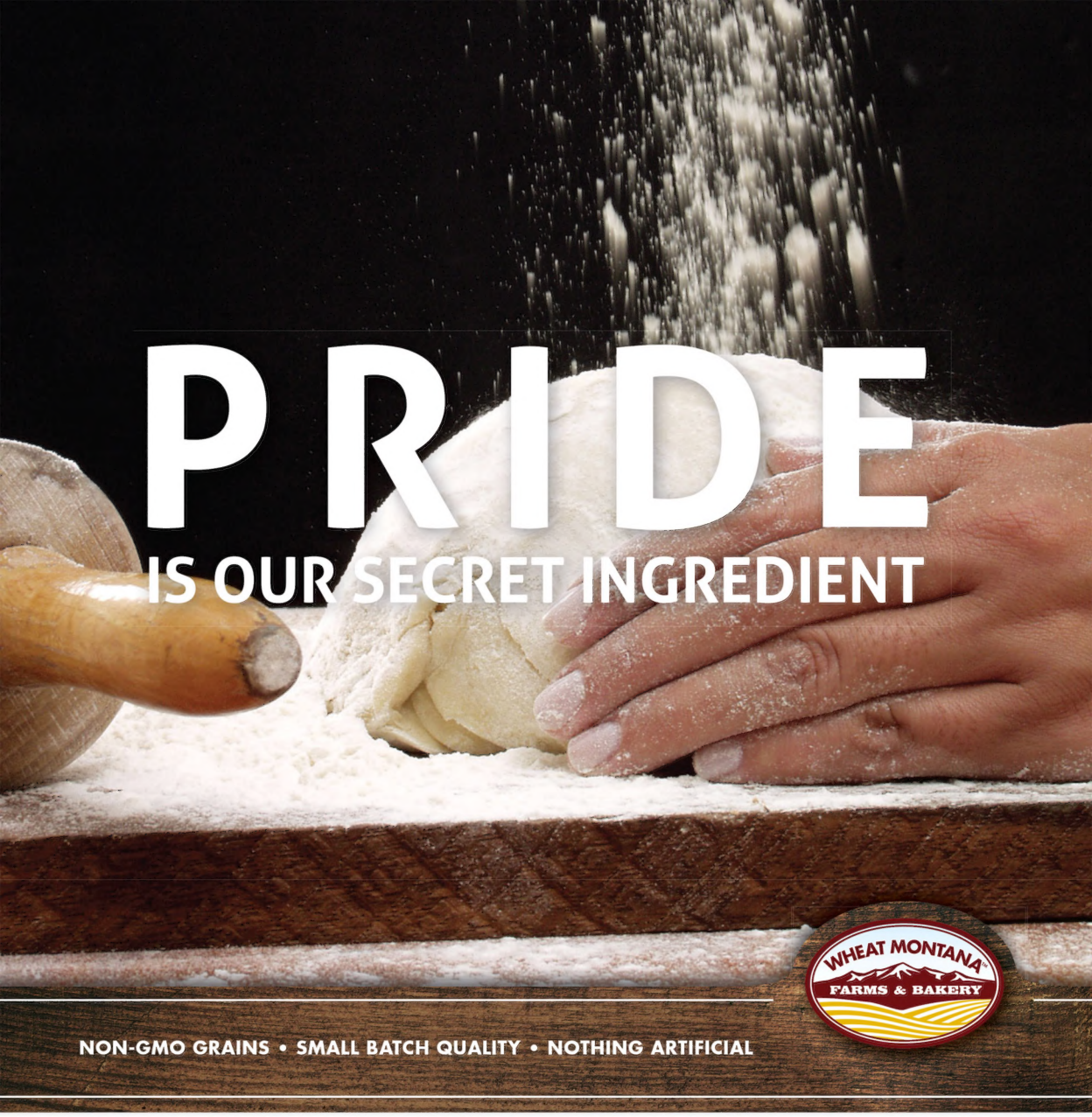

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